

THE RESIDENT'S GUIDE TO DEVELOPMENT IN LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY:
ENHANCING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS

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Abstract

CREATIVE PROJECT: The Resident's Guide To Development In Lexington, Kentucky:

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In order to foster informed engagement and meaningful input within Lexington, Kentucky's development planning process, educational materials for the public to learn about the foundational concepts of development planning are needed. This research will create an engaging, graphic-based guide for the public to learn about Lexington's development planning process, called, *The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington*. Using engaging graphics and approachable narrative, this resource will review the purpose development serves, regulations it abides by, and standards it must meet. Accompanying this guide is a write-up highlighting public education as an integral component to successful public engagement within the development planning process. This research's context will be explored through a review of Lexington's recent history with public engagement within planning processes. A literature review will lay the foundations of this project by reviewing the methods and processes of public participation and graphic communication. Utilizing five comparable projects as guides and inspiration, the details of the graphics and narrative for the final project will be established.

Keywords: public engagement, public participation methods, planning communication, development planning, graphic communication, Lexington, Kentucky

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The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky:
Enhancing Public Engagement in the Development Planning Process

1. Statement of the Creative Project

From 2014 to 2018, I worked in the Division of Planning for the City of Lexington, Kentucky. During my time there, I became passionate about public engagement in the development planning process. I have pursued this passion further through my graduate education and have used this capstone project to celebrate my foundational time in Lexington. This research will develop a predominantly graphic-based educational resource called *The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky*. It is my hope that this guide will be a resource that empowers the public to engage in the development planning process.

1.1. Significance

In recent years, Lexington has prioritized public engagement within the development planning process. They have formally changed the review process to host public input before planning commission meetings for zone change applications. They have created a *Public Engagement Toolkit* to help developers and the public navigate those public input meetings (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2020). Lexington has also published a glossary of urban design terms called, *The Urban Design Decoder*, and is updating their guide to the development review process, *The Developer's Handbook* (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2017, 2019c). Even with these resources, there exists a gap in educational material for the public to learn about the foundational concepts of development planning. What is needed to fill the gap is a resource on the development planning process, the purpose development serves, regulations it abides by, and the standards it must meet. This research will create *The*

Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky to serve as this resource. The guide will use engaging graphics and approachable narrative to communicate Lexington's development planning process to the general public. These graphics will serve as educational visual aids that will allow for better engagement with the public, and foster informed and meaningful input within Lexington's development planning process.

1.2. Motivation

Through my experience working in Lexington, I witnessed first hand the contrasting public engagement opportunities between comprehensive planning and development planning. My work in Lexington specialized in public engagement within the comprehensive planning process. I worked on three small area plans and Lexington's 2018 comprehensive plan update. I also became involved with the development review process by reviewing submitted plans for greenspace compliance. During my time reviewing development plans, I witnessed the disparity of public engagement within the development planning process in comparison to the comprehensive planning process. Most notably, the quality of public engagement within the development planning process is lacking in comparison. Through my observations, I became passionate about empowering the public to meaningfully engage in the development planning process.

The planning profession highly values public engagement within the comprehensive planning process but does not always carry that same priority into the development planning process. These two processes vary in what they output, but should not vary in quantity and quality of public engagement. The output of the comprehensive planning process is the comprehensive plan; a visionary document that establishes growth and policy recommendations.

Public engagement is seen as vital for the comprehensive plan as their input is needed to guide community visions and policies. The outputs of the development planning process are development proposals; the plans required to obtain building permits and begin construction. These proposals should reflect the visions and policies adopted within the comprehensive plan as development is ideally a direct implementation of the comprehensive plan. Unfortunately, the public are engaged in the development planning process in order to seek their approval, or in order for staff to respond to their disapproval of the proposed development. It operates as an approval-seeking process in contrast to the input-seeking, vision-casting, policy-influencing public engagement process of comprehensive planning. The public's involvement is pertinent not just in community visioning but all the way through to the implementation of their community's growth and development.

A hindrance to enhancing this opportunity for public engagement is a lack of educational materials for the public to learn about the foundational concepts of development planning. The public are typically engaged in the comprehensive planning process and not the development planning process. They are familiar with the type of influence they are given over community vision and policies, but not with their influence over proposed development plans. In order for their engagement to be informed and meaningful, they must be better educated on the development planning process itself. This conviction has inspired the creation of *The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky*, culminating from my experience in Lexington, with the aim to create an educational resource that will equip and empower the public to meaningfully engage in the development planning process.

2. Methodology

This research was conducted through a narrative and content analysis methodology. First, research and analysis of public engagement and development planning focused documents created within the past five years by The City of Lexington's Planning Division was conducted in order to better understand the existing narrative on public engagement within the development planning process. Next, a literature review was conducted focusing on the methods and processes of public participation and graphics communication. Finally, a group of five comparable projects were reviewed and assessed in order to guide the structure, design, and narration within this project.

A selection of Lexington's existing documents was researched and analyzed to develop an understanding of the planning background and the existing narrative on public engagement within the development planning process. The documents were selected due to their recent publication dates (ranging from 2017 to 2020) and their relation to public engagement within the development planning process. The documents reviewed are *The Placebuilder*, *Imagine Lexington*, *Public Engagement Toolkit*, *The Developer's Handbook* and *Urban Design Decoder* (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2017, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2020).

The literature review documents public engagement methods, graphic communication best practices, and how graphics have been used within the development planning process. Public engagement methods are reviewed to better understand effective engagement, how engagement is crucial within the development planning process, and how to enhance engagement for more meaningful input. Next, best practices of graphic communication are reviewed including the importance of data visualization and the standards used for effective informational

graphics. Finally, graphic communications currently existing within development planning processes are reviewed including citizen's guides, design charrettes, and SmartCode.

Five comparable projects were selected and reviewed in order to serve as sources to better understand effective and approachable graphic design and narration. These projects were selected because their purpose is to specifically inform and empower the public for better engagement within the development planning processes of their respective communities. The selected comparables were created by The City of Lexington, Yard & Company, Urban Strategies Inc., and The Center for Urban Pedagogy. Each comparable project was reviewed and assessed by the author for its content, graphics, and narration.

3. Planning Background

Lexington, Kentucky has a long history of progressive urban and development planning, and even in the face of steady growth, is continuing its progressive policies by prioritizing more dense development over sprawling growth. To ensure these policies stay true to the community's vision, the city's Division of Planning prioritizes informed public engagement within the development planning process. They have done this by creating educational materials for the public to use as a resource, but have not yet created a resource for the public to learn about the foundational concepts of development planning. It is my hope that *The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky* will serve as this resource.

3.1. Planning Context

The city of Lexington, Kentucky's history of progressive urban and development planning began when they adopted their first comprehensive plan in 1931; only two years after the nation's first comprehensive plan for Cincinnati, Ohio. Lexington continued their progressive planning policies by adopting the nation's first urban growth boundary in 1958. Lexington carries this history into every planning project that they do. In their most recent comprehensive plan, *Imagine Lexington* (adopted in 2018), Lexington reports that they have been experiencing a steady population growth rate of 1.2% (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2019a). In order to accommodate its growing population, Lexington plans to increase its development but not by simply expanding outwards. Lexington's urban growth boundary was adopted in order to minimize infrastructure costs, with a byproduct of preserving its agricultural heritage and prime farmland soils, and its expansion is an immensely important matter that should not be taken lightly. Within *Imagine Lexington*, the Division of Planning communicates their priority of

developing in a sustainable, more dense manner; prioritizing infill and redevelopment efforts (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2019a). The public input component of *Imagine Lexington* reports that this priority is also reflected by Lexington's rural advocacy groups and the general public (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2019a). The Division of Planning is working towards implementing this vision by adopting policies and updating regulations that prioritize, incentivize, and allow for more dense development. To ensure the community's vision is reflected in its implementation, the public must be involved in every step of the planning process. This includes the development review process.

3.2. Problem Addressed

Lexington has increased its efforts to prioritize public engagement within development planning processes by creating educational materials for the public to use as a resource, as well as utilizing graphics in these documents to make the content more approachable. The 2018 comprehensive plan, *Imagine Lexington*, places great emphasis on the importance of public engagement in the development planning process (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2019a). A new development review tool, *The Placebuilder*, asks developers to meet with neighborhoods surrounding their to-be-developed properties before they begin the application process (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2019b). In order to help developers and neighborhoods host these meetings, the Division of Planning created a guide to public engagement meetings called, *The Public Engagement Toolkit (PET)* (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2020). The Division of Planning also created a glossary of urban design terms, *The Urban Design Decoder*, to help alleviate barriers keeping the public from being able to engage in conversations about the design of proposed developments

(Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2019c). A document that details the development review process, *The Developer's Handbook*, also exists as a resource for the public (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2017). This handbook is actively being updated, with the new version, titled *Development Handbook*, to be released later in 2021. All of these documents utilize graphics to help communicate the concepts and processes they present to the public. Even though Lexington has been prioritizing public engagement in the development planning process, it has not yet published educational materials on development's foundational concepts.

Educational materials on the foundational concepts of development planning would assist the public in understanding the role development plays in the growth of their city. It is generally understood that more dense development means less expansion, but not how FAR, setbacks, or infrastructure planning affect the physical results of more dense development. There is a great opportunity to enhance public engagement in the development planning process by reviewing these foundational concepts of development planning. *The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky* will serve as this educational resource. While more detailed guidance exists, this guide will fill a gap for the average resident who wants to have a general understanding of the process. This guide will serve as an entry-level resource, created to reduce barriers for public engagement in the development planning process. This guide will empower and enable effective, informed, and meaningful public engagement in the development planning process. It will be a visually engaging, graphic-based educational guide on the regulations development abides by, standards development must meet, and the processes through which development is reviewed.

3.3. Project Parameters

This guide will be an educational resource for the general public to reference in order to better understand development planning. It will utilize graphics to communicate planning concepts and processes, and will use approachable narrative to support and further explain these graphics. This project will not duplicate information that has already been published by the City of Lexington. *The Public Engagement Toolkit* and *The Developer's Handbook* address how the public can engage in the development review process and the *Urban Design Decoder* offers definitions of urban design terms (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2017, 2019c, 2020). These three resources do not offer educational material on the foundational concepts of development planning such as zoning, subdivision regulations, or *The Placebuilder*. These are key concepts for the public to understand in order to meaningfully engage in the development planning process.

4. Literature Review

This literature review is divided into the following parts: public engagement, graphic communication, and graphics in development planning. Within public engagement, effective engagement, enhancing engagement, and engagement in development planning are explored. Within graphic communication, data visualization and infographics are explored. Within graphics in development planning, design charrettes and Smart Codes are explored.

4.1. Public Engagement

Public engagement within planning processes and projects is integral to their success. Sherry Arnstein, in her 1969 *Journal of the American Planning Association* article, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation,” argues that “democracy is built on the governed participating in the government” (p. 216). The United Nations (UN) even acknowledges and supports the importance of public engagement. They have done this by adopting a set of goals and objectives which establish the importance of community participation. In their Sustainable Development Goal #11, the UN states, “Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable” (United Nations, 2020). They reiterate the importance of community participation within an objective of Sustainable Development Goal #11; “enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated, and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries” (United Nations, 2020). Henry Sanoff, in his book *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning*, argues that the UN has been influential in reestablishing the importance of community participation in community development by ensuring the process is accessible by all who want to be politically involved and share in the development process (2000). Simply engaging the public in the process does not deem it successful. Sanoff argues that citizen

participation can often be the source of confusion and conflict in a community's planning process (2000). The meaning and methods of effective engagement need to be understood so that public engagement is no longer a source of confusion, but an act of inclusion.

4.1.1. Effective Engagement

A professional planning organization in the United States, The American Planning Association (APA), states in their "Articles of Incorporation" that planners are to contribute to the public's well-being by more effectively meeting the needs of their communities (Farmer, 2013). Meeting the needs of communities cannot be addressed without effective citizen engagement. In their foundational book, *Planning and Urban Design Standards: Student Edition*, Frederick Steiner and Kent Butler explain that effective engagement operates with the purpose to give citizens a voice in order to improve the overall quality of their community (2007). This philosophy was explored and illustrated almost forty years earlier by Sherry Arnstein in her Ladder of Citizen Participation. Within this illustration, Arnstein proposes a hierarchy of levels of participation and then assesses the effectiveness of engagement for each level (1969). The Ladder of Citizen Participation is structured in the following manner (1 being the lowest level of citizen engagement and 3 being the highest) (Arnstein, 1969):

1. **Nonparticipation:** contrived substitutes for genuine participation
 - 1.1. Manipulation - power holders educate the public, engineering their support
 - 1.2. Therapy - power holders cure the public, realigning their values
2. **Degrees of Tokenism:** allowing participants to be heard and/or have a voice
 - 2.1. Informing - the public lacks power to be heeded
 - 2.2. Consultation - the public has no assurance their concerns are being heard

- 2.3. Placation - the public is asked to advise but not decide
- 3. **Degrees of Citizen Power:** allotting decision-making influence to the participants
 - 3.1. Partnership - the public has negotiation power
 - 3.2. Delegated Power - the public has the majority of decision-making power
 - 3.3. Citizen Control - the public has full managerial power

Arnstein reports that one of the roadblocks to reaching the highest levels of participation and effective engagement is that the public has an inadequate knowledge-base (1969). She argues that the specialization of knowledge has occurred within the planning process due to ineffective engagement (1969). Sanoff supports this notion by arguing that when the public are engaged and empowered, they learn more about whatever issue is being debated, enabling effective engagement (Sanoff, 2000). Sanoff states, “in order to maximize learning, the process should be clear, communicable, and open” (2000, p. 10). Therefore, effective engagement is equally dependent upon the public being educated and feeling empowered to engage.

4.1.2. Enhancing Engagement

Methods for achieving effective and educational participation are active learning, co-production of knowledge, and consensus building. In an article for Urban Land Institute's *Land Lines*, Emma Zehner proposes active learning approaches in her article “Game Time: Active Learning Puts an Engaging Spin on Urban Planning Education” (2019). She argues that in-person public engagement should transition from presentations and lectures to active learning environments which encourage action, interactivity, and innovative thinking (Zehner, 2019). Zehner then states, “Through well-designed [active] learning experiences that get people to collaborate, converse, teach, and learn with others... people tend to be more humbled about what

they don't know, [and] more open to different perspectives..." (p. 40). Active learning and collaboration allowing the public to open up to other perspectives sets a foundation for the co-production of knowledge.

Kyle Miller, in a blog post for the American Planning Association, argues that co-production of knowledge is required to achieve meaningful community participation (2019). Sanoff supports the co-production of knowledge by defining participation as the collaboration of people pursuing objectives that they have defined together (2000). He then states that although citizens volunteer to participate in the planning process, professional assistance is usually needed due to technical capacity (Sanoff, 2000). Sanoff argues that the organizer of planning efforts should serve as a facilitator and an educator (2000). Sanoff proposes utilizing a consensus organizing model that emphasizes strategy, pragmatism, and relationship building in order to support the co-production of knowledge (Sanoff, 2000). In their book, *Building Rules: How Local Controls Shape Community Environments and Economies*, Warner and Molotch state that consensus building models help informed decisions be made because information grows in breadth and depth as it is shared and debated (2000). They state that a greater knowledge base cultivates a greater capacity for collective problem solving (Warner & Molotch, 2000).

4.1.3. Engagement in Development Planning

In regards to public engagement in development planning, Sanoff argues, "The [developed] environment works better if the people affected by its change are actively involved in its creation" (Sanoff, 2000, p. x). He further argues, "[one of the] main purposes of participation is to involve people in design decision-making processes and, as a result, increase their trust and confidence in organizations, making it more likely that they will accept decisions

and plans” (2000, p. 9). Warner and Molotch comment on this matter by stating the public must have a stronger voice, and tangible influence, within the development planning process (2000). Regarding the foundation of public engagement, Steiner and Butler add, “people relate to and care about where they live; it’s one of the fundamental ways through which we continue to connect as human beings” (2007, p. 40). Mark Hinshaw and Marya Morris, within their APA PAS Report #591 *Design Review: Guiding Better Development*, argue that engaging the public in development planning is important because the public can contribute valuable perspectives and express ideas about how development can contribute to the community as a whole (2018). They state engagement “supports local democracy by allowing citizens to engage in the shaping of their communities by offering comments on proposals before they reach the construction stage” (Hinshaw & Morris, 2018, p. 14). The public’s involvement in development planning is key and strategies for effectively engaging them in that process need to be reviewed and assessed.

Strategies for Public Engagement in Development Planning. Arnstein reviews several strategies for public engagement that are utilized within the development planning process. First, Arnstein argues public engagement within the development planning process can take the form of informing, rather than engaging (1969). Within the development planning process, the public is not often brought into the conversation until a late stage of the planning process; leaving the people little opportunity to influence the proposal designed “for their benefit” (Arnstein, 1969, p. 219). Arnstein further argues, “intimidated by futility, legalistic jargon, and prestige of the official, the citizens accepted the ‘information’ and endorsed the agency’s proposal” (1969, p. 219). Next, Arnstein argues that public engagement within the development planning process can take the form of consultation. She lists surveys, neighborhood meetings, and public hearings as

frequent methods used for consulting the public during the process (Arnstein, 1969). She states, “this rung of the ladder is still a sham since it offers no assurance that citizen concerns and ideas will be taken into account” (Arnstein, 1969, p. 219). The public who are actively trying to engage in the planning process can be left frustrated and wanting if these are the only strategies engaged.

Published as PAS Report 556 in 2009, Marya Morris' *Smart Codes: Model Land Development Regulations* brings attention to the fact that “when viewed from a regulatory perspective, citizen participation requirements for development review have not evolved much since Arnstein's work published in 1969” (p. 240). Morris further states that the public are only engaged in the development review process within the format of a public hearing (Morris, 2009). She highlights the hypocrisy in this process by stating, “because public hearings are typically held near the end of a process and are more informative than interactive in nature, considering them a participation mechanism is often a stretch” (Morris, 2009, p. 240). Jeffrey Spivak, in his 2019 *Planning* article “6 Tips for Inclusive Public Meetings,” argues that the format of public meetings needs to change:

Public meetings can be a disappointment. Most are under attended and run according to a formula that hasn't changed much over the years. They are usually held on a weekday evening, with a fixed and rigid agenda. Experts make lengthy presentations filled with planning jargon and legalese, and limited time is slotted for public input. (p. 37)

In an APA blog post reviewing Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, Antonio Castenada argues effective engagement within the development planning process is still possible if meaningful engagement strategies are started with the public in the early planning and

decision-making phases (2019). Spivak suggests strategies for inclusive public engagement that are easy to include in the development planning process, one of which is eliminating barriers to engagement (2019). Nolan Gray, a frequent *Strong Towns* blog contributor, comments in his blog post “Why Urban Design Should Come From the Bottom Up (Part 1)” that removing barriers to engaging in the development planning process is important because ideal and feasible designs cannot be achieved without the knowledge of the many residents, tenants, architects, developers, and financiers involved in the developing a site (2019). He points out, “These are, after all, the people with the greatest local knowledge and incentives to succeed in their design” (Gray, 2019). To ensure effective public engagement within the development planning process, strategies like active learning, co-production, and consensus building should be employed alongside efforts to remove of barriers to engagement.

Barriers to Public Engagement in Development Planning. Within the development planning process several barriers exist that keep the public from being able to feel educated and empowered to effectively engage. A selection of these barriers include jargon, detailed regulations written in legal-based language, and complicated processes that are not easy to identify or follow. *Urban Omnibus*, a publication of The Architecture League of New York, interviewed Christine Gasper of New York’s The Center for Urban Pedagogy, a non-profit organization that uses art and design to break down complex urban issues in order to increase meaningful civic engagement, on their public engagement resource, *What is Zoning?* In the interview, an argument is made that “breaking down complexity and empowering citizens... provides for building more inclusive, truly public processes” (Urban Omnibus, 2014). They also state educating the public on the terms utilized in the development review and planning process

enables the public and the planner to engage in informed conversation and work together to develop a final product (Urban Omnibus, 2014). Joseph DeAngelis, in his *Zoning Practice* article “Zoning Education for Communities” states that the ultimate goal of engaging the public in development planning is empowering them with the necessary tools and knowledge of zoning, land use, and development so that they can offer educated and informed feedback and criticism (2016). DeAngelis argues that efforts to effectively engage the public in development planning will require a rational organization to the information presented, simplifying concepts for the public’s comprehension, utilizing graphics to visually aid these concepts, as well as reducing or eliminating jargon (2016). The author dives more specifically into the importance of utilizing graphics to enhance public engagement in development planning.

DeAngelis states that the public engagement aspect of design review processes often include numerous questions from the public including, “why are you putting parking behind the building? Why are you allowing taller buildings?” (2016, p. 2). Questions like this arise because conversations surrounding development planning contain numeric-based standards and jargon recited from ordinances and regulations. DeAngelis argues the public becomes confused when discussing the application of development standards and regulations, but they understand illustrations and visualizations of new development (DeAngelis, 2016). Graphics and visualizations of development regulations, standards, and processes help explain the impact and context of development, helping answer questions like these from the public.

4.2. Graphic Communication

Graphics and visual communication is key to effective public engagement in the development planning process. This is because zoning ordinances and subdivisions are not easy

to navigate as they are bogged down with legal-based language. Bill Riddick in his 1971 book *Charrette Processes: A Tool in Urban Planning* argues “because people are not all verbally oriented, some can more quickly pick up the information being relayed... when this information is condensed into visual form” (p. 39). It can be difficult to visualize the impact of setbacks, floor-area-ratios (FARs), and even minimum lot frontages, even for those who deal with the planning concepts on a regular basis. Lankow, Ritchie, and Crooks argue in their 2012 book *Infographics: The Power of Visual Storytelling* “the Information Age has fundamentally changed the way we think and communicate. We are now a culture that thrives on learning and sharing... which requires new methods of communication” (p. 12). Graphic-based educational material is pertinent to successful public engagement in the development planning process.

4.2.1. Data Visualization

The purpose of graphic creation is to make data easily readable and communicate information that can be difficult to describe (Jacoby, 2016, p. 30). Data visualization is converting information into graphic images, and is helpful in accountability, communicating, and efficiency (White, 2004). The process of data visualization includes taking abstract information and translating it into easily understood and interpreted images that can enhance planning, urban design, and decision-making processes (Steiner & Butler, 2007). Insightful visualizations start with asking what needs to be known because an effective design requires a deep understanding of the problem, the data, and the users (Fisher & Meyer, 2018). Lankow, Ritchie, and Crooks argue that a visualization's communication goals are based on who the audience is and the content you are trying to communicate (2012).

Visual translations of information can complement and strengthen our mental abilities and verbal interpretations (Meirelles, 2013). Utilizing three dimensional graphics can be effective in demonstrating a complex concept (Steiner & Butler, 2007). Visual interpretations can create understanding of both the aesthetic and functional qualities of a plan or design (Stiener & Butler, 2007). “[Visualizations] can also help overcome communication difficulties caused by the use of planning jargon and technical terms” (Steiner & Butler, 2007, p. 336).

Within the development planning process, visualization tools and techniques can show what the built environment might look like within different design and development scenarios (Steiner & Butler, 2007). Architectural and urban drawings are often diagrammatic reductions that translate abstract spatial relationships (Jacoby, 2016). Essentially, all architectural and urban drawings are diagrams of the different functions, zones, structures, building parts, and elements and their arrangement (Jacoby, 2016). When designing development graphics, it must be clearly communicated that they are more indicative than prescriptive; diagramming the principles and aims of the development (Jacoby, 2016). If the interpretation of a graphic fails, then the visualization itself fails; which is why the creation of the graphics themselves must intentionally infuse recognition of the audience into the process (Meirelles, 2013).

4.2.2. Infographics

The effectiveness of engaging the public through infographics is communicated well in the following quote by Lankow, Ritchie, and Crooks: “Presenting information by way of engaging visuals immediately attracts readers and entices them to dig deeper into the content” (2012, p. 40). Lankow, Ritchie, & Crooks support this point of view with a quote by Steve Jobs on the importance of design, “good design not only garners additional appeal for an item, it can

also actually incite an emotional reaction” (2012, p. 40). They then further argue that appealing to the audience’s aesthetics and emotions prompts a deeper connection with the information (Lankow, Ritchie, & Crooks, 2012). They further state that graphics should be appealing in order to engage with their audience, they should enable a clear understanding by effectively providing knowledge, and they should impart memorable knowledge allowing for retention of information (Lankow, Ritchie, & Crooks, 2012). When executed properly, graphics can add value to the data and information by entertaining the audience (Lankow, Ritchie, & Crooks, 2012).

Parolek, Parolek, and Crawford, in their 2008 book *Form-Based Codes: A Guide for Planners, Urban Designers, Municipalities, and Developers* define infographics as a form of graphic data visualizations that focus on “usability design” which was mainstreamed as a term with the emergence of the internet and poorly designed websites (2008, p. 171). They argue that the key to creating graphics most users can understand is simplicity (2008). Infographics do just that within the field of data visualization. Because of their simplicity, infographics allow for speed and efficiency in interpreting and understanding the presented information (Lankow, Ritchie, & Crooks, 2012). Lankow, Ritchie, & Crooks argue that a good infographic has utility, soundness, and beauty (2012, p. 198). They define utility as communicating the objectives of the data, soundness as communicating the meaning of the data, and beauty as communicating the visual solution (Lankow, Ritchie, & Crooks, 2012).

Lankow, Ritchie, and Crooks effectively call out existing issues of engaging the public within the development planning process by stating a product is not designed well if the audience requires a detailed explanation of how it works (2012). This statement explicitly applies to zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and even design-based codes. They further convict

planners and developers by stating, “if your product is a physical object, you have a unique opportunity to display a diagram of its anatomy while calling out its various features and applications” (Lankow, Ritchie, & Crooks, 2012, p. 166). Lankow, Ritchie, & Crooks powerfully state that the key to transforming our communication is through visualization because it has the ability to provide meaningful insights and engage the audience (2012). These visual tools aid in the processing of vast amounts of information, and when coupled with human creativity, are essential to making the message of development planning both relevant and appealing (Lankow, Ritchie, & Crooks, 2012)

4.3. Graphics in Development Planning

Kevin Desouza and Kendra L. Smith write in their 2015 article “Model Citizens: Visualization, Modeling, and Simulation Technologies are Immersing Stakeholders in the Planning Process, that “today, we have opportunities to move beyond static engagement... to more dynamic engagement where the stakeholders interact directly with our underlying data, allowing them to simulate for themselves various alternatives” (p. 27). They also state that emerging technologies in visualization and modeling are creating new avenues for greater collaboration and public engagement in the planning process (Desouza & Smith, 2015). Desouza and Smith further argue important information about the development planning process can get buried in spreadsheets text-heavy ordinances and regulations (2015). Graphics and visualizations expand public engagement within the development planning process beyond words and numbers; people see how the standards and regulations impact what they see and interact with in the built environment (Madill, Lennertz, & Beyea, 2018). In a *Planning* article titled “Planning and the Art of Storytelling,” Jay Walljasper argues that “data is important, but people really care less

about the ‘what’ of data and more about the ‘why’ and ‘how’ a project is going to improve their communities and their lives” (2018, p. 29). Visualizations within the development planning process are powerful and help inform the public, promote their buy-in, and build community pride (Thomas, 2018, p. 33).

Common forms of utilizing graphics within public engagement related to development planning are design charrettes and Smart Codes. Design charrettes utilize graphics as a component of their efforts to effectively engage the public through co-production strategies. Smart Codes graphically illustrate detailed development regulations and standards for easier comprehension. The effectiveness of enhancing public engagement in the development planning process within these two formats is reviewed below.

4.3.1. Design Charrettes

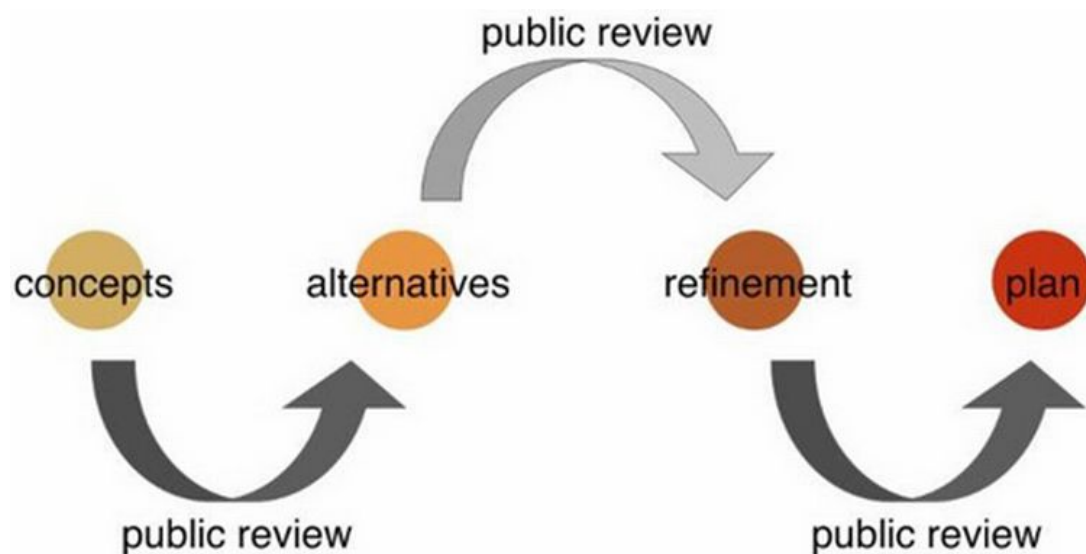
The National Charrette Institute defines a charrette as a multi-day public engagement event where the public, various stakeholders, developers, designers, and local planners work together to co-produce design solutions for the built environment (Madill, Lennertz, & Beyea, 2018). As Madill, Lennertz, and Beyea rightly observed, “design charrettes provide collaboration by creating an environment of trust and transparency” (Madill, Lennertz, & Beyea, 2018, p. 9). Riddick states in his book *Charrette Processes*, “if all have a hand in the planning then there will be greater support for the ideas that come out of the charrette sessions” (1971, p. 4).

Within development planning, charrettes help alleviate the fear of change that the public often has with development proposals by offering multiple scenarios (Madill, Lennertz, & Beyea, 2018). To many residents, development automatically translates to more density, more people, and more traffic, which they view as only eroding their quality of life (Madill, Lennertz, &

Beyea, 2018). During the charrette process, refer to Figure 1 below, the engaged public see their feedback being addressed within the design iterations and come to understand and support the development proposal (Madill, Lennertz, & Beyea, 2018). Figure 1 demonstrates that between each step of the development design process, the public is asked to review the proposal and give immediate feedback. The public is engaged multiple times throughout the process, ensuring that their concerns and wishes are addressed along the way. The benefit of a charrette is combining both co-design and co-production to enable highly creative and feasible design solutions (Madill, Lennertz, & Beyea, 2018, p. 3).

Figure 1

Design Charrette Process



Note: (Source: Lennertz, 2016)

4.3.2. Smart Code

Smart Code is the application of form-based code to a transect zoning spectrum. The form-based aspect of Smart Code addresses the physical and visual impact of development,

while the transect zoning addresses the property's context within the community (Emerson, 2007). Smart Code maximizes on the approachability and usability of form-based code since they are visually-based (Parolek, Parolek, & Crawford, 2008). Smart Code establishes a development process composed of several steps that determine the most appropriate form (form-based code influence) and context (transect zoning influence) for the proposed development (Emerson, 2007). Within these steps are related data visualizations and infographics related to the development standards and regulations that are to be addressed. These graphics include photographic examples, front sections, and three dimensional models of the various lot development scenarios (Emerson, 2007). Form-based codes typically include an Element Type Vision Sheet which diagrams micro elements of development, like roads, public spaces, and building types (Parolek, Parolek, & Crawford, 2008). This type of summary sheet is helpful in quickly summarizing development details that are often dispersed through subdivision regulations and zoning ordinances. The creation of a form-based code or smart code often incorporates public engagement to help create a community vision for incorporated standards and regulations (Parolek, Parolek, & Crawford, 2008, p. 11).

Given the literature on the role of the public in the development planning and review process, it can be concluded that public engagement is pertinent for successful development planning. The public's understanding of the process is enhanced through engaging educational material. Working together, planners and an educated, engaged public can make decisions about what development is best for the community. Translating data into graphics is important and designing with the audience in mind is key to successfully engaging the public. Infographics can significantly enhance the public's understanding of the development planning process and should

be utilized to communicate standards, processes, and proposals. Encouraging the engagement of the public within the development planning process through graphically-based educational materials allows for better decisions to be made for the community as a collective. In the next section, we consider some exemplary projects that utilize some of these techniques to more effectively engage the public in the development planning and review processes.

5. Comparable Projects

Five comparable projects will serve as sources to better understand effective and approachable graphic design and narration. These projects were selected because their purpose is to specifically inform and empower the public for better engagement within the development planning processes of their respective communities. Each comparable project is reviewed and assessed by the author for content, graphics, and narration. The selected comparables are created by The City of Lexington, YARD & Company, Urban Strategies Inc., and The Center for Urban Pedagogy. Examples of graphics and content narration will be included with each document's review.

The first project reviewed is *The Public Engagement Toolkit (PET)* by The City of Lexington (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2020). *The PET* states it is a set of “tools for bringing developers and residents together to plan better communities” (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2020). It consists of colorful, engaging graphics and approachable narration that help both developers and the public navigate the public engagement component of the development planning process. This project was selected because it is Lexington's Division of Planning's document dedicated to assisting public engagement within the development planning process. Its review will help guide the graphic design theme and narration language for *The Resident's Guide to Development* as well as help the author understand the current standards expected by the public in Lexington, Kentucky.

The next project reviewed is *The Neighborhood Playbook* by YARD & Company (YARD & Company, 2016). YARD & Company is an urban growth firm based in Cincinnati, Ohio, that “uses place to solve problems through design, experiences and development” (YARD and

Company, 2021). *The Neighborhood Playbook* is a document created for developers and the public alike and is designed for “activating spaces, developing places” (YARD and Company, 2016). It is a unique document in that its design is split in half; content relating to developers can be read from the front to the back, and the content relating to the public can be read from the back to the front. It is a pocket-sized booklet that is created to be written, scribbled, and jotted in. Each section is broken into an easy to follow five step process for influencing the physical, economic, and social aspects of any community. This document was selected due to its engaging graphics and universally applicable content structure. Its review will inspire the engaging graphic design theme and narration language for *The Resident's Guide to Development* as well as set an example for how to simplify detailed concepts for easy comprehension.

The third project reviewed is *A Citizen's Guide to Density* by Urban Strategies Inc. (Urban Strategies Inc., 2012). Urban Strategies Inc. is an urban design and planning company based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada that consider themselves “problem solvers who can help achieve successful outcomes for the full range of urban opportunities” (Urban Strategies Inc., 2021). *A Citizen's Guide to Density* is a document created to showcase thirty case studies of residential development within the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area that “demonstrate that greater residential density, in and of itself, should not be a cause for concern, but should rather be seen as an opportunity to be harnessed” (Urban Strategies Inc., 2012, p. 2). The case studies are supported with photos, graphics, and diagrams of the residential developments which help communicate the reality of a project's physical form. A variety of graphic styles are used to help communicate each case study; including cross-sections, aerials, isometrics, and photos. The document also discusses density as a general term and helps explain the variety of residential

development patterns the public often sees but cannot necessarily classify. This document was selected due to its topical focus on density itself as well as its use of a variety of graphics to help communicate how density can compliment a community, rather than detract from it. Its review will help guide the graphics of *The Resident's Guide* that concern the form and design of the built environment.

The final two projects reviewed are *What is Zoning? Guidebook* and *What is ULURP? Guidebook* both of which are by The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) (The Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2013, 2017). CUP is a non-profit organization based in New York City that “uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement particularly among underrepresented communities” (The Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2021). The *What is Zoning? Guidebook* and *What is ULURP? Guidebook* both focus on the development planning processes within New York City and use engaging graphics and approachable narration to clarify complicated concepts. These two documents were selected out of CUP's large anthology because their content specifically focuses on the development planning process; what the concept of zoning is and how it works in New York City, as well as the city's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). Reviewing both of these documents will help guide the graphics and narration of *The Resident's Guide* as they are exemplary booklets aimed at helping the public better understand processes in order to empower them to engage within the development planning process.

5.1. City of Lexington - The Public Engagement Toolkit

Author. The City of Lexington Kentucky's Division of Planning is the author of *The Public Engagement Toolkit*. They created the toolkit to help foster conversation at public engagement meetings between citizens and developers (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2020). In the opening statements of the document's Executive Summary, the Division of Planning states, "To accommodate [Lexington's] growth, development in Lexington will continue to take the form of infill and redevelopment in and around neighborhoods throughout the Urban Service Area. These projects require communication to create results that enhance existing places" (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2020).

Content. *The Public Engagement Toolkit (PET)* is a tool created for public engagement in the development process (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2020). As of 2019 with the adoption of Lexington's newest comprehensive plan update, *Imagine Lexington*, developers are encouraged to meet with the neighborhoods affected by their proposed development before they begin their development planning process (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2019b). *PET* was created by the Division of Planning to give guidance to both the developers and the neighborhoods on how to host successful meetings and engage in meaningful ways. The document provides meeting tips, ideas for meeting format and structure, questions citizens can ask developers, and general reference guides of the development planning process. A useful inclusion is an explanation on what it means to come to a consensus in the development planning process and how to get there. The Division of Planning also suggests a list of materials to provide or ask for in meetings. It is a very useful guide for how to host successful public engagement meetings in the development planning process.

Graphics. The *PET* graphics created by The Division of Planning are simple, people-oriented, and accessible (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2020). Below are two examples of graphics taken from *PET*. The first example in Figure 2 is an infographic example that highlights the do's and don'ts of interacting in a public engagement meeting. This graphic is simple in design and features people-centered images. This style allows the reader to identify with the people in the graphic and imagine themselves interacting in a public engagement meeting. This example also gives guidance to the types of commentary recommended for a successful public engagement meeting. The graphic reads a little text heavy but is effective, in the end, at providing a useful example for the reader.

The second example, Figure 3, is a graphic that details the spectrum of public participation and how it relates to the development planning process. The content is detailed and requires a lot of text, even when simplified into a graphic. This graphic features a host character, who is recurring throughout the document and is modeled after a Lexington Division of Planning staff member, presenting the information related to public participation. This character helps guide the reader through the document and acts as a visual anchor for the reader; a character they can reorient to. Even though the graphic is text-heavy, the detailed information presented is accessible thanks to the relatable host character, and simple graphic style. Assessing these two graphics, Lexington has provided simple, approachable graphic styles and characters that are unfortunately accompanied with detailed text.

Figure 2

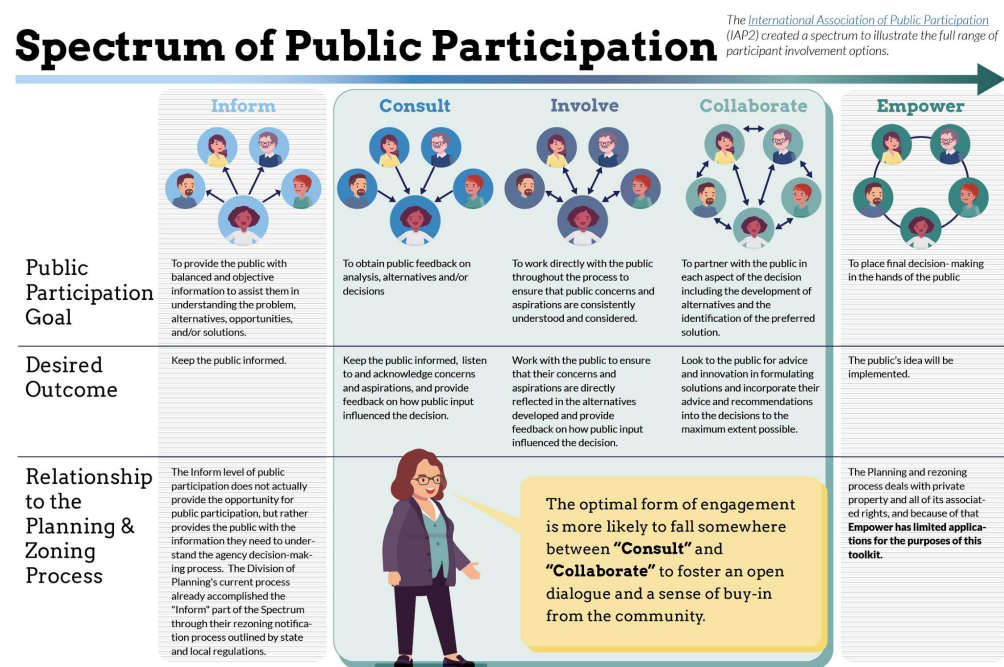
Public Engagement Toolkit Graphic Example - Do's and Don'ts of Public Meetings



Note: (Source: Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2020)

Figure 3

Public Engagement Toolkit Graphic Example - Public Participation Spectrum



Note: (Source: Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2020)

Narration. A lot of information is packed into *PET* and it is organized very well. The document is fairly text heavy and can initially feel burdensome for a casual reader. The content, although extremely helpful and will serve as a good guide for neighborhoods, is not accessible by most of the general public. The general public does not need to understand the details of the public participation spectrum, for example. They need to understand why their input is important, how they can contribute, and how it will affect the proposed development. This guide will rather serve as a useful source for a neighborhood association, or even a Councilmember, to help better explain the purpose of public engagement meetings to their constituents. The information within *PET* is very detailed and is presented in a relatively concise format.

The *PET* is still jargon-heavy and wordy for a member of the general public to casually reference. The graphics definitely help summarize the content, but a decent amount of reading is still required in order to better understand the context of the graphics. An excerpt of the narration taken from the example in Figure 4 below is, “The software specializes in GIS and data visualization, providing an easy to use interface for citizens to access building permits and planning applications...” (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2020). This excerpt contains helpful language, but could have been presented in a more casual, approachable manner. For example, it could be reworded to: “BuildingEye is a tool for you to use to learn more about proposed developments. It displays past and current proposals on an interactive map, where you can click and explore information related to the proposal.” This reworded version helps the casual reader better understand how this planning resource, BuildingEye, can be useful for them. Rewording some of the content of the *PET* would help this document be a more accessible, universal tool for the entire Lexington community.

Figure 4*Public Engagement Toolkit Narration Example - Planning Resources*

Planning Resources

BuildingEye

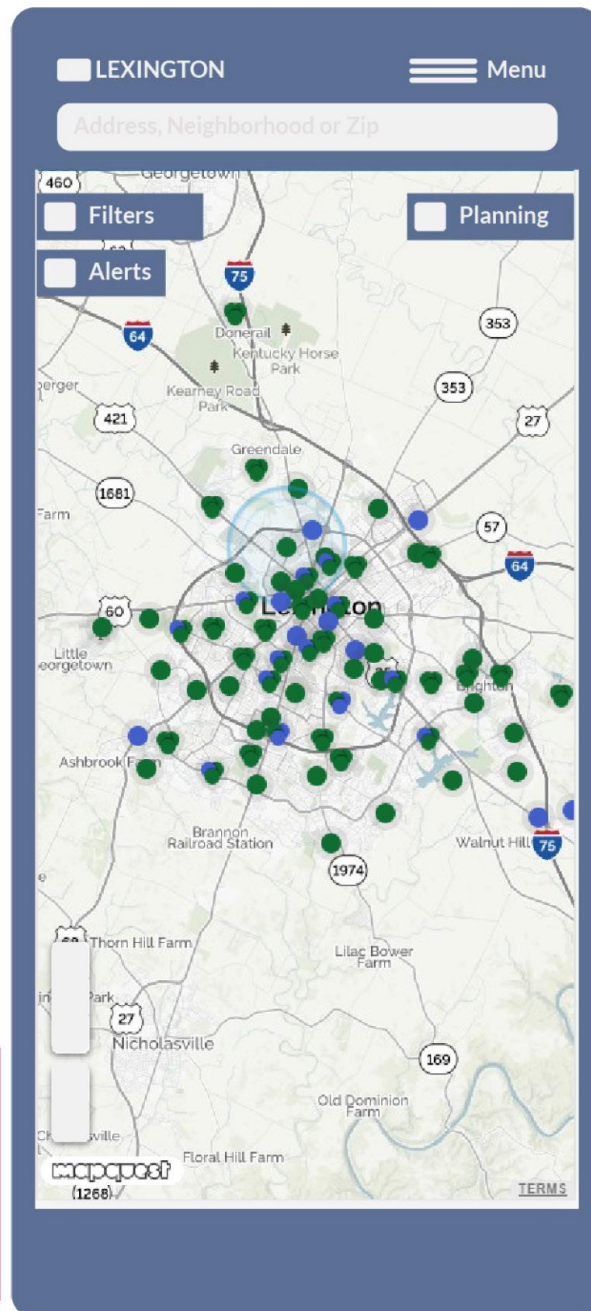
The software the City uses to map all planning and building permit applications is known as BuildingEye (<https://lexingtonky.buildingeye.com/>). The software specializes in GIS and data visualization, providing an easy to use interface for citizens to access building permits and planning applications in its current format, but with future potential to help track code enforcement, capital projects, public events, business licenses, and other civic activities 24 hours a day.

Users can view all open and completed planning applications and building permits from July 1, 2016 through today on an interactive map of the City. Users can filter by open or completed applications, date ranges, and application types, as well as search by keyword, application number of street address. By creating a login, citizens can set an alert and be notified when a new record is submitted either near a specific address or within a Council District.

Selecting a particular data point opens a window with the basic details of the project and a link to the Accela Citizen Portal for more information.

Geographic information system (GIS): noun -

a framework for gathering, managing, and analyzing data. Rooted in the science of geography, GIS integrates many types of data. It analyzes spatial location and organizes layers of information into maps.



Note: (Source: Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2020)

Review. The *Public Engagement Toolkit* is an extremely useful tool for those who have the time and interest to better understand how public engagement should exist within the development planning process. Although the document is fairly text heavy, the accessible graphics aid in moving the eye through the page. The graphics are also used well to highlight important information on each page so that the reader quickly understands the important information. One important thing is missing from the *PET*, a graphic summarizing the entire development review process. Adding this graphic would help give context to the importance of public input in the process, and would help explain the format and purpose of public input in all the different meeting types and scenarios. I will use the human-centered, simple designed graphics of the *PET* as inspiration for *The Resident's Guide* and will aim to keep the guide's narration approachable for all audiences by sharing the basic, need-to-know, information about the development planning process.

5.2. YARD & Company - The Neighborhood Playbook

Author. YARD & Company (YARD) is an urban growth firm from Cincinnati, OH and is the author of *The Neighborhood Playbook*. YARD uses a market-first approach, which they call "Demand Discovery" (YARD & Company, 2021). This approach is a unique, place-centered strategy that focuses on creating a demand before providing a supply, and allows anyone to act as a catalyst (YARD & Company, 2021). Because of this approach, the playbook is designed to be a tool for multiple groups at the same time. Unfortunately, this playbook is only available for purchase or you happen upon a YARD event where they are being distributed to the public.

Content. *The Neighborhood Playbook* features a split-in-half design where content for developers reads front-to-back, and content for neighborhoods reads back-to-front. With the tagline, “activating spaces, developing places,” *The Neighborhood Playbook*’s developer section provides strategies on how to take advantage of an urbanizing market while overcoming both perceived and real lingering risks (YARD & Company, 2016). The neighborhood section of the playbook features the same tagline, but teaches how to conduct an experiment that will influence the physical and economic destiny of the community (YARD & Company, 2016). Operating as a true playbook, both of these sections are structured around five plays that help both the developer and neighborhood pursue and achieve their goals for their project and community (YARD & Company, 2016). The playbook does not feature a lot of its own content as it is designed to be written in and used for visioning exercises. YARD provides approachable, simple instructions for each play, supported by engaging graphics and activities, that allows this playbook to function as a useful guide and tool for both developers and neighborhoods. The content is also not place-specific, allowing this document to be used in communities everywhere.

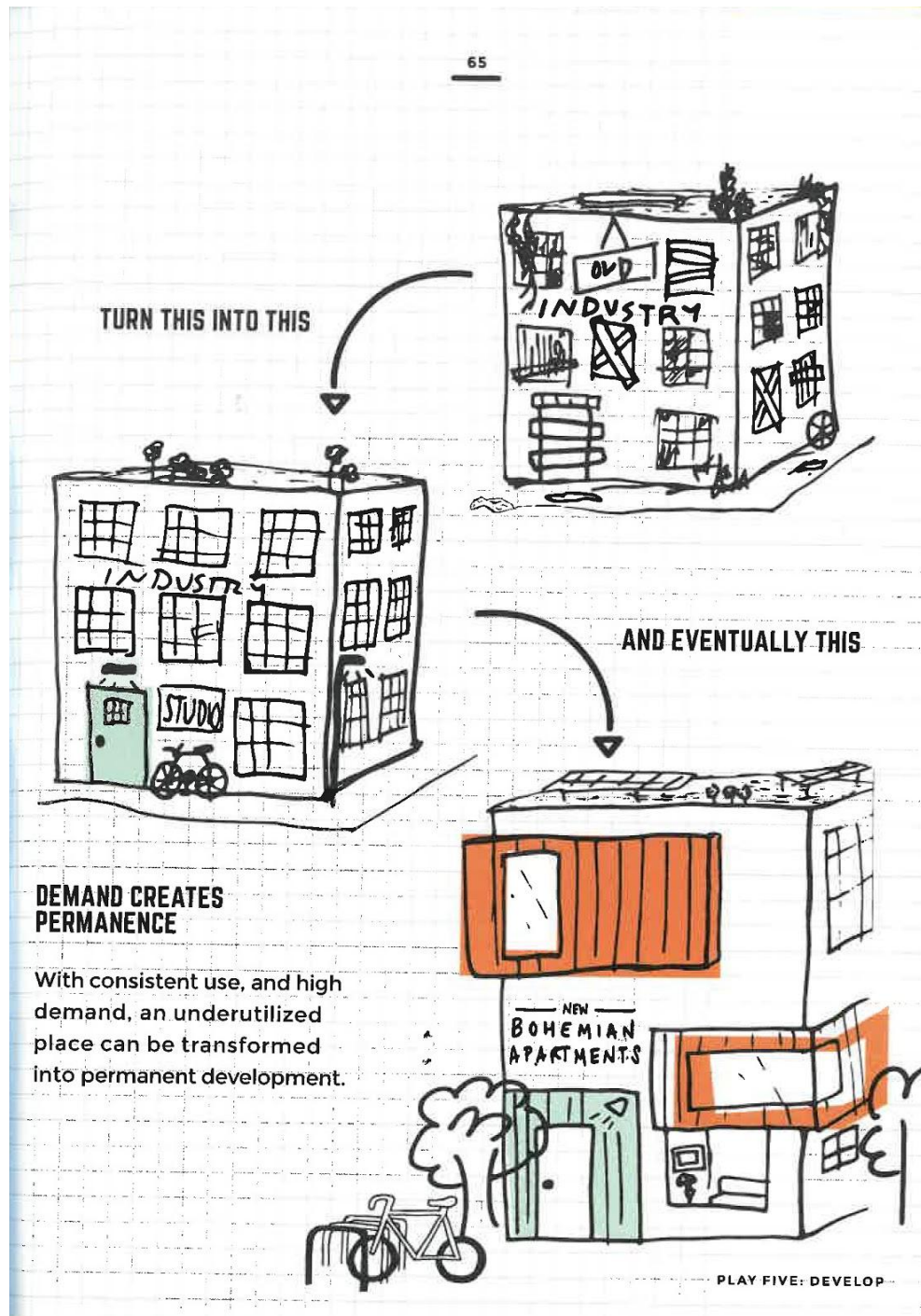
Graphics. YARD’s use of engaging graphics makes this playbook unique and exemplary. Because the document is targeted for multiple audiences, the graphics and narration are crafted to be fun, engaging, and approachable. The graphics feature a hand-sketched design, encouraging the reader to sketch alongside them. This style of graphics is casual on purpose as the document is meant to be written in; a tidy, perfectly designed document wouldn’t encourage the reader to scribble or doodle ideas. A great example of this style is below in Figure 5. This graphic exemplifies how small changes can create large, lasting change to forgotten places. The sketch nature of the graphics allows the reader to freely sketch their own ideas for growth in their

community. The accompanying text helps the reader better understand the purpose of visioning growth and gives guidance for how to achieve it.

A second example, Figure 6, showcases the many avenues for marketing projects. It is a simple column graphic that orders methods by media type. This graphic is designed as an easy reference list for both developers and neighborhoods. It incorporates bright, fun colors, and keeps the details streamlined so that they can be quickly referred to. *The Neighborhood Playbook* reflects this design theme throughout its entirety and is successful in displaying information in an engaging way while remaining informative and a useful tool for all audiences.

Figure 5

Neighborhood Playbook Graphic Example - Demand Creates Permanence



Note: (Source: YARD & Company, 2016)

Figure 6*Neighborhood Playbook Graphic Example - Marketing Avenues**Note: (Source: YARD & Company, 2016)*

Narration. The content of *The Neighborhood Playbook* is focused and well organized. YARD's vision for the playbook is clearly communicated through the engaging graphics, universal useability of the playbook, and the accompanying approachable narration. The format itself lends to simple, straightforward language. An excerpt of the narration taken from the example in Figure 7 is: "Everyone and anyone living in a neighborhood can provide valuable insight... Take a look at how everyone else would approach these plays and see how you can begin to work together to create lasting change" (YARD & Company, 2016). This excerpt reflects the language that exists throughout the entire playbook. It is targeted towards the reader, gives advice or guidance for next steps, and is approachable by all audiences. It is not jargon heavy, nor is it wordy. The design of this playbook being limited in size for the sake of remaining a pocket-sized playbook forced YARD to communicate through engaging graphics and simple, guiding language.

Figure 7

Neighborhood Playbook Narration Example - Engage Everyone



Note: (Source: YARD & Company, 2016)

Review. *The Neighborhood Playbook* is an approachable, useful tool for all audiences passionate about influencing the physical, social and economic aspects of their community. The playbook is effective in giving guidance for “activating spaces, developing places” through both its graphics and narration. Fun, engaging, and approachable, the playbook will serve as inspiration for the graphics and narration for *The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky*. Although the guide will not be designed for the reader to scribble or doodle in, it will look to the informal style of graphics used in the playbook for inspiration on how to create approachable graphics. The narration of the playbook will also give guidance to *The Resident's Guide* for how to simplify detailed concepts for easy reader comprehension.

5.3. Urban Strategies Inc. - Citizen Guide to Density

Author. The author of the *Citizen Guide to Density* is Urban Strategies, Inc.; a Canadian urban design and planning company. The document opens by stating Canadian cities, from 2001-2006, were growing at such a fast rate that their populations would double every 50 years (Urban Strategies Inc., 2012). In order to accommodate this growth, future development would have to embrace density. They created this guide to showcase thirty case studies of dense residential development within the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area in order to demonstrate how density can be an attractive opportunity (Urban Strategies Inc., 2012).

Content. Urban Strategies Inc. included numerous examples of dense residential development within this document. In total, thirty case studies are consolidated into this document to showcase the various forms of dense residential development. This citizen guide houses two goals: to document Canadian residential developments and to educate citizens on

density and the benefits included. Unfortunately, the document is structured more like a reference guide than a citizen's guide. It contains important information related to the developments' design and planning, but does not simplify or summarize that information for quick, easy-to-understand reader comprehension.

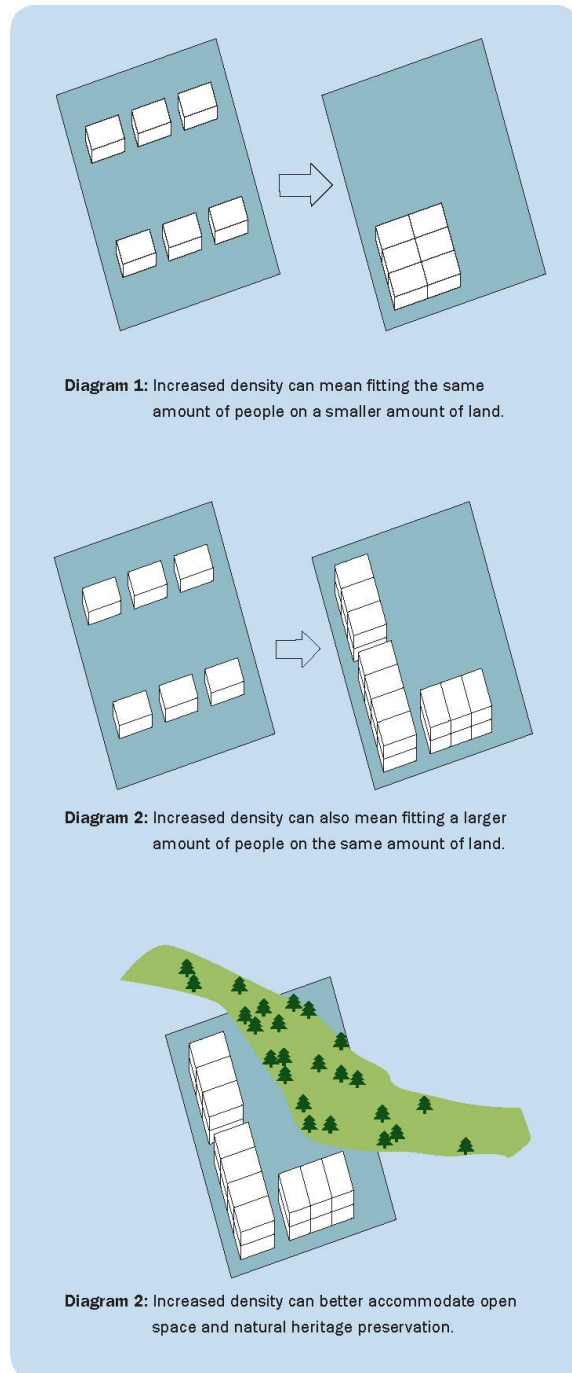
Graphics. Each case study included in the guide includes cross sections, 3D graphics, plan views, and photos of the development. This variety of graphics helps communicate the design and form of development through multiple perspectives. Two examples of graphics from the guide follow. The first example, Figure 8, depicts three diagrams that demonstrate how density changes the functionality of a property. The first diagram simply shows how density can fit the same number of units on less property. The second shows how higher densities allow for more people to use a space at one time. The third diagram depicts how higher densities can accommodate for other land uses, like greenspace, on the same property. These diagrams are helpful in communicating the benefits of density to the general public. The illustrations are clean and simple, and the accompanying narration is easy to understand. This graphic is one of the most helpful images within the entire document as it visually depicts how density can increase the utility of a property.

The second graphic example from *Citizen Guide to Density*, Figure 9, depicts a range of dense residential types. Urban Strategies Inc. states that these images are to be used by the reader as a reference for the type of appropriate dense residential development for different urban environments (Urban Strategies Inc., 2012). These residential types are introduced before the case studies are presented so that the reader has a foundational understanding of the benefits of each type of development. Even though this graphic only includes photographs of each type of

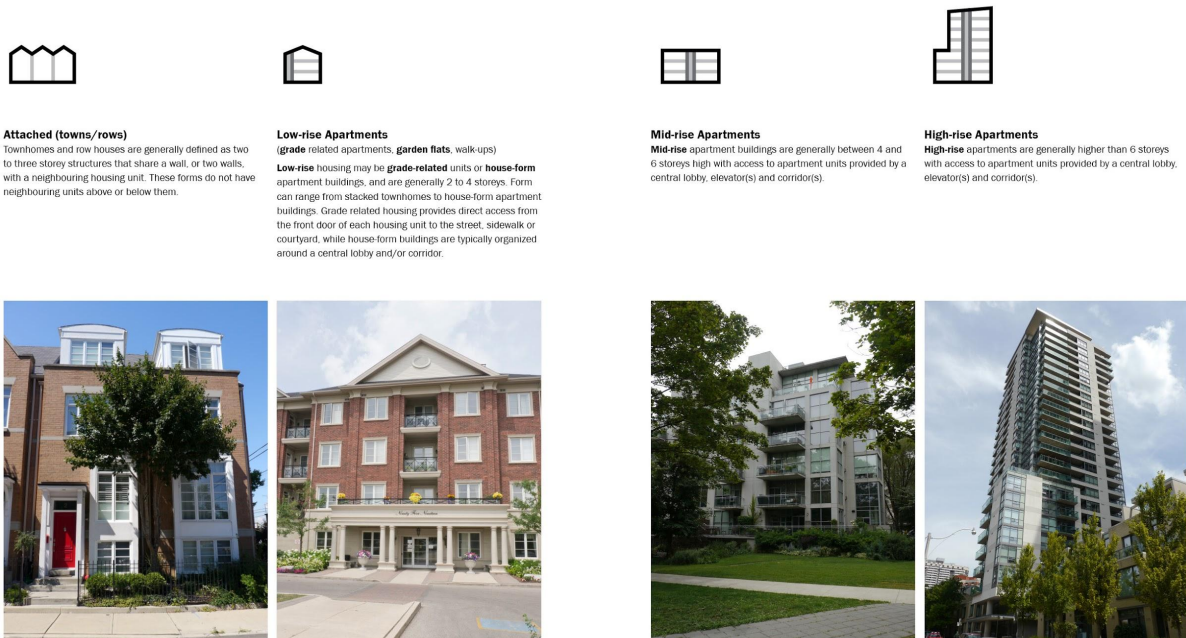
development, it serves as an informational resource for the reader who needs to better understand the residential offerings before diving into the case studies. The accompanying narration for this graphic explains each residential type well but relies on jargon to communicate aspects of each type that may not be necessary for all readers to understand. If this guide was better formatted for a general public audience, this narration would need to be simplified for their understanding, but due to the rest of the document better serving other audiences, planners and related professionals, the accompanying narration is appropriate.

Figure 8

Citizen Guide to Density Graphic Example - Density Diagrams



Note: (Source: Urban Strategies Inc., 2012)

Figure 9*Citizen Guide to Density Graphic Example - Residential Range*

Note: (Source: Urban Strategies Inc., 2012)

Narration. The *Citizen Guide to Density* is not accessible to the public due to its text and jargon heavy narration. For example, a description of floor-area-ratio (FAR) is excerpted in Figure 10 below; “[FAR] is used to measure the intensity of a site being developed... It is a ratio of the total floor area of the building(s) in relation to the area of the lot upon which it is constructed” (Urban Strategies Inc., 2012, p. 9). This wording is familiar with those rooted in the profession, but are not so easily understood by the general public. This excerpt would be easier to understand if supported by a graphic depicting a variety of FARs.

The case studies themselves are nice resources for planners and developers to reference when presenting proposals to the public. The general public does not benefit from reading through such detailed case studies. Simpler, summarized versions of the case studies would be

beneficial for citizen reference, but the guide's detailed case studies only benefit those who are already familiar with development design jargon and context. The summarized versions could simply include pictures of the developments followed by bulleted statistics about the development; density, number of units, or amenities. These could serve as accessible visual reference sheets for the public to compare and contrast developments in their own communities.

Figure 10*Citizen Guide to Density Narration Example - Density Explained***Sidebar: Density Explained**

There are a number of ways to measure density in order to understand and plan for the right amount of people, jobs, housing, businesses and community services within a given area. The three most common approaches are:

Floor space Index (FSI) / Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

- This approach is used to measure the intensity of a site being developed. It can be applied to any land use (i.e. residential, employment). It is a ratio of the total **floor area** of the building(s) in relation to the area of the lot upon which it is constructed.
- For instance, an FSI of 2.0 would indicate that the total floor area of a building is two times the area of the lot on which it is constructed. This may take the form of a building that is two storeys in height and occupies the entire area of the lot, or a building that is taller than two storeys, but occupies less than the total lot area.

Population Density (PPH)

- This approach is used to measure the density of people (or jobs) within a given area. This measurement is useful to plan for a wide range of municipal services, and to design for **transit supportive communities**. The measure can be applied to any land use, and is calculated by dividing the total population by the given area.
- For instance, if it can be expected that two residents typically occupy each apartment unit within a development, then the total population is obtained by multiplying the number of units by 2 residents. Once obtained, the total population can be divided by the area of the development to determine the population density.

Residential Density – (UPH / UPA)

- This measure is typically used to calculate the number of housing units within an area of land. It can be applied at a variety of scales, to measure the density of a single lot, block, or neighbourhood.
- The measure is usually applied to units per hectare of land (UPH), or units per acre of land (UPA).

Net-to-gross:

Residential densities vary according to how much land is included in the calculation. A large area, containing a great deal of roads, parking and open space will have a lower density than a small area that is covered primarily by housing.

In municipal planning and development, residential density is typically measured as “net” or “gross.” “Net density” refers to the number of housing units in a given area of land devoted to residential development. While it includes driveways, private yards, ancillary structures, and other elements intended for private use, it does not include public rights of way and park land. “Gross density” refers to the number of housing units in a given area, but includes infrastructure such as streets, sidewalks and public spaces.

This report uses ‘net density’ to ensure that measurements are more easily comparable to one another, excluding as much as possible the unique characteristics of **topography** and infrastructure beyond the boundary of each private development lot.

Note: (Source: Urban Strategies Inc., 2012)

Review. Overall, *A Citizen Guide to Density* is a useful tool for planners or other professions rooted in development and design. The jargon and text-heavy format do not create an

accessible document for the public. It operates successfully as a reference document, but not as a citizen guide. Although the purpose of the guide does not align with those of *The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky*, the graphics used within the case studies to communicate the density and form of each development will serve as guides for graphics in *The Resident's Guide*.

5.4. The Center for Urban Pedagogy - What is Zoning? Guidebook

Author. The *What is Zoning? Guidebook* is written by The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP). Located in New York City, CUP is a non-profit organization whose focus is to create resources that increase civic engagement (The Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2021). This zoning guidebook is one component of CUP's larger Envisioning Development series; of which the fifth comparable project, *What is ULURP? Guidebook* (on page 59), is also a component. This series looks to enable the public to meaningfully participate in land use decisions by teaching them about land-use terms and concepts (The Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2021). This guidebook specifically focuses on educating the public about zoning and related land-use matters.

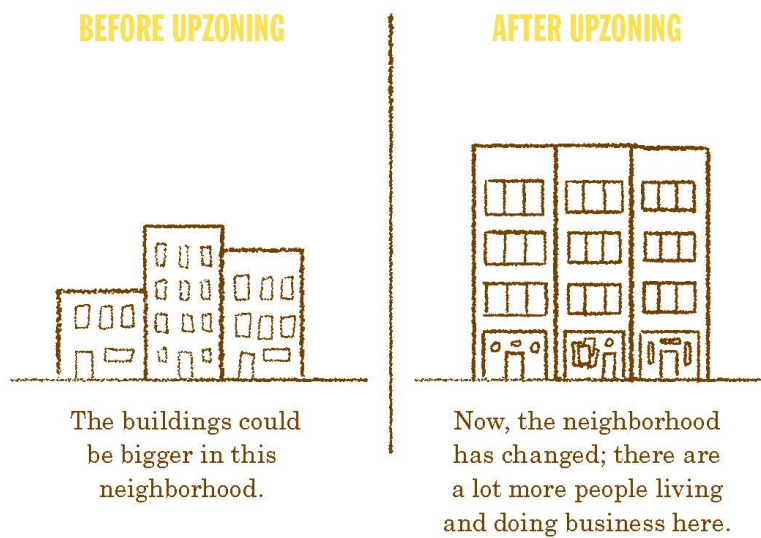
Content. *What is Zoning?* is a guidebook solely dedicated to educating the public on New York City's zoning. It includes breakdowns of how zoning affects density, land use, and neighborhoods. The first section of the guidebook focuses on answering typical questions about zoning like what zoning is, how it affects the size and shape of buildings, and what a rezoning is. The second section of the guidebook focuses on the zoning workshop, which is not included in this review.

Graphics. CUP's zoning guidebook includes a variety of graphic styles, all of which are casual and informative. The graphics included in the guidebook are simple diagrams that explain how zoning works and are effective at communicating complicated aspects of zoning in a manner friendly to those who are unfamiliar with the concept. For example, in Figure 11, the reality of what it means when a property undergoes an upzoning is graphically translated. This graphic is a side-by-side comparison of a property before and after an upzoning. Its sketch-like design and the accompanying narration make it accessible and easy to understand. The second example, Figure 12, also reflects this sketch-like design supported by accessible narration, but reviews much more detailed information. This second example showcases the range of residential development through the residential zones. Rather than adding more text descriptions to support the detailed content, CUP simply added more graphics; an effective method for communicating detailed concepts to the general public.

The overall design of the guidebook is similar to a scrapbook, or at-home stop-motion film. Photos of people appear as if cut out of photos and are incorporated into other sketched elements. Similar to YARD & Company's *The Neighborhood Playbook*, the graphics are sketch-like which implies a casualness, making the content appropriate for any reader. Contrasting *The Neighborhood Playbook*, the zoning guidebook maintains a simpler color scheme.

Figure 11

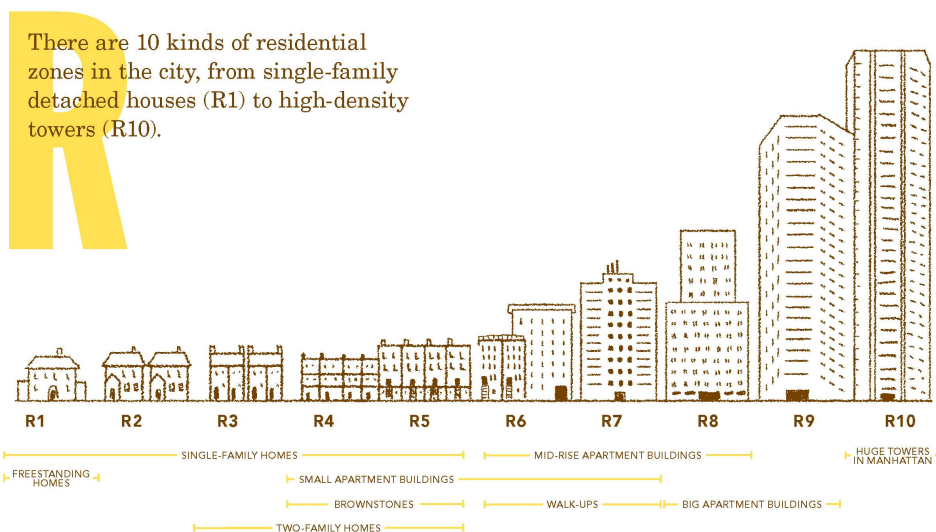
What is Zoning? Guidebook Graphic Example - Upzoning



Note: (Source: The Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2013)

Figure 12

What is Zoning? Guidebook Graphic Example - Residential Zones

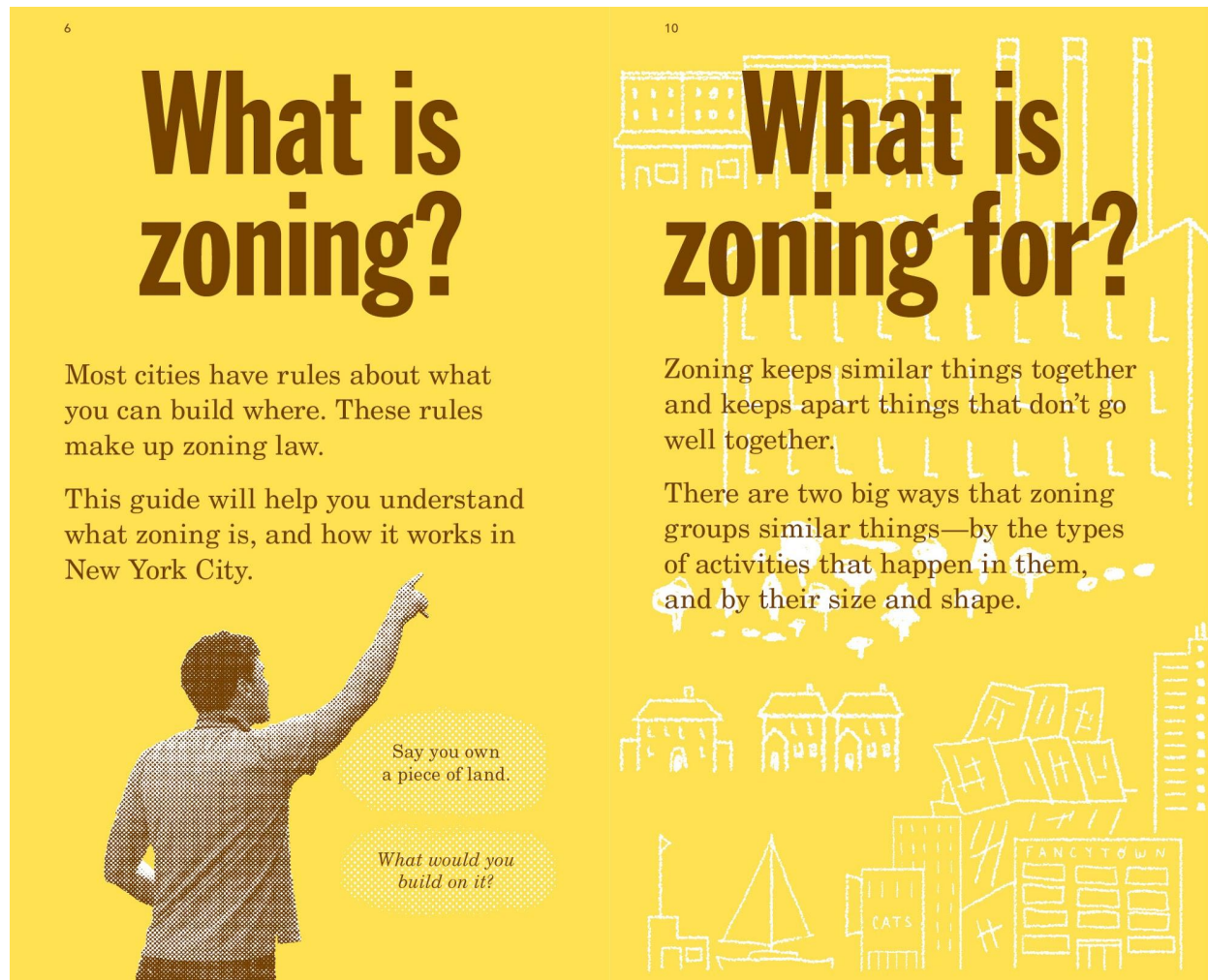


Note: (Source: The Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2013)

Narration. The narration is equally successful as the graphics in communicating to the public in an approachable manner the planning concepts related to zoning. The descriptions are short, stick to the main concepts, and use very friendly language that is not filled with jargon. If a planning-specific term is used, a definition, description, and sometimes a graphic follows. CUP has done a very good job at approaching the topic of zoning through the public's eyes. They address questions the public could have and give only necessary details when a concept is needing defined. For example, in Figure 13, they define zoning as “rules about what you can build where...[it] keeps similar things together and keeps apart things that don't go well together” (The Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2013, p. 6, 10). A simple definition like this is all that a member of the general public needs to know in order to understand what zoning is and what it is used for.

Figure 13

What is Zoning? Guidebook Narration Example - What is Zoning?



Note: (Source: The Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2013)

Review. This guidebook is an extremely useful resource for the residents of New York City to better understand zoning in their community. The Center for Urban Pedagogy, being rooted in their identity as a non-profit existing to educate the public, keeps their vision and tone of voice narrowed into the details that really matter. They reflect this simplicity and approachability in their graphics.

5.5. The Center for Urban Pedagogy - What is ULURP? Guidebook

Author. The *What is ULURP? Guidebook* is written by The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP). Similar to the fourth comparable project, *What is Zoning? Guidebook* (on page 54), this guidebook is a part of CUP's Envisioning Development series. It specifically focuses on educating the public about New York City's land use review process, ULURP (The Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2017). This project was selected in addition to the *What is Zoning? Guidebook* because it is a resource on a development planning process, rather than a development planning term.

Content. ULURP is New York City's land use review process. The process is very detailed which is reflected in the text-heavy format of the guidebook. The ULURP guidebook gives a thorough explanation of the development review process and answers many questions about its intricacies. The content of this guidebook is a good resource but a bit easier to understand for those who already have a background in planning. The complicated nature of the land-use review process is summarized in graphics throughout the guidebook, but the specifics of the process require a lot of explanation through text.

Graphics. The graphics in the ULURP guide book are many and come in a variety of forms. Overall they are simple and educational; approachable and easy to understand. Similar to the CUP zoning guidebook the ULURP guidebook utilizes a very simple color scheme. Most of the graphics utilize icons and simple process graphics, as exemplified in graphics below. Figure 14 summarizes the ULURP process while Figure 15 summarizes the ULURP timeline. Both graphics are structured in a way where it is easy for the reader to understand the process, but rely on text to explain the detailed content. A more prevalent use of graphics, alongside a slimming

down of content details, would make this a more successful guidebook for the general public to learn about the ULURP process.

Figure 14

What is ULURP? Graphic Example - ULURP Process

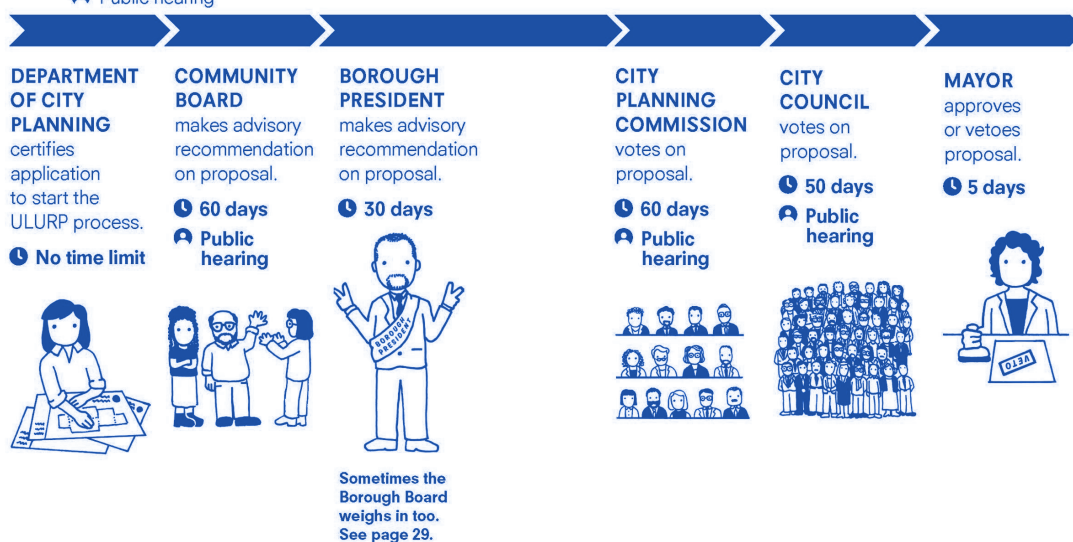


Note: (Source: The Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2017)

Figure 15*What is ULURP? Guidebook Graphic Example - ULURP Timeline*

Here's the basic timeline for what happens after a city agency or developer submits a ULURP application:

KEY: ⌚ Time Limit
 🗣️ Public hearing



24

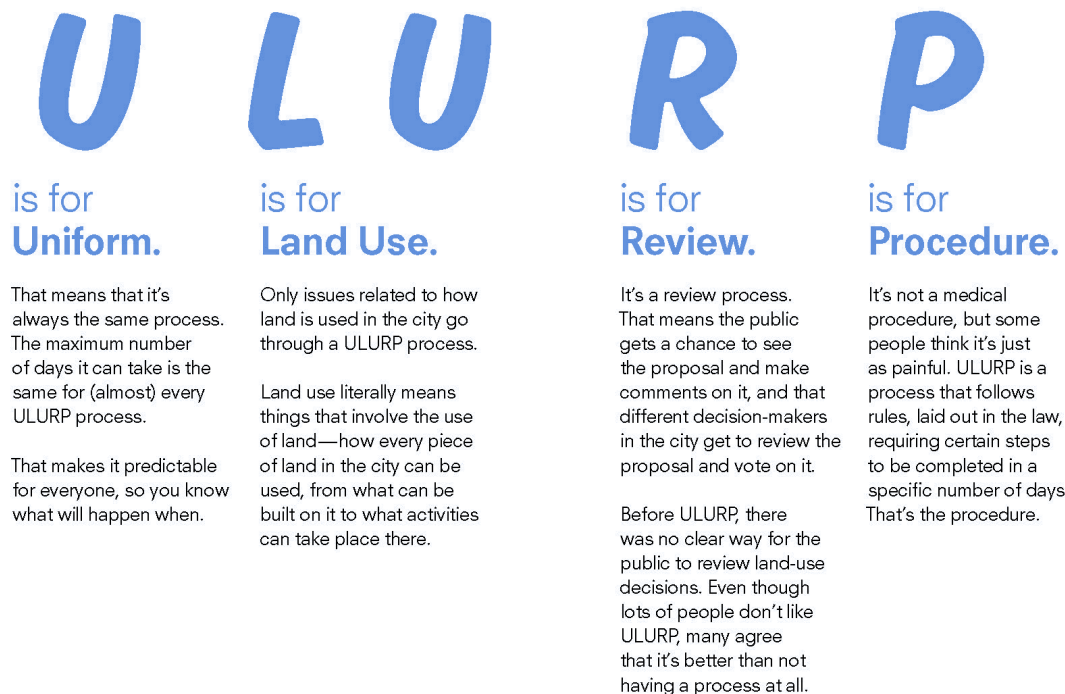
What Is ULURP?

Who makes decisions?

25

Note: (Source: The Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2017)

Narration. CUP's strong suit is approachable narration which is due to their focus for educating, enabling, and empowering the public to engage in New York City's land use planning process. Although the language is approachable, there is still a lot of text within this guidebook. As exemplified in Figure 16, the description below "R is for Review" could be boiled down to the first paragraph. The second paragraph is superfluous for the public to understand what the R in ULURP stands for (The Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2017).

Figure 16*What is ULURP? Guidebook Narration Example - ULURP Meaning***What does it mean?**

10

What Is ULURP?

What is ULURP and why does it exist?

11

Note: (Source: The Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2017)

Review. This guidebook covers every step and detail of the ULURP and I believe a simpler, boiled down version would be more accessible to the general public. It will serve as a useful guide for *The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky* for when the development review process itself needs to be summarized in graphic form. It will also serve as a reminder to not dive too deep into details that may not be necessary for the public's understanding of the process.

6. Creative Project Description

The project is guided by what was learned from researching Lexington's planning context, conducting a literature review, and reviewing comparable projects. By researching Lexington's planning context, an understanding of the existing narrative on public engagement within Lexington's development planning process was formed. A literature review was conducted in order to better understand public engagement methods, graphic communication best practices, and how graphics have been used within the development planning process. Five comparable projects were reviewed in order to comprehend how graphics and narration affect a document's approachability to the general public. What was learned is that effective public participation within the development planning process is dependent upon educational materials that utilize jargon-free, approachable narrative that is supported by simple, engaging graphics. This research culminates in *The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky*, which will serve as a resource that empowers the public to engage in the development planning process.

6.1. Project Concept

Effective and meaningful participation occurs when the public is educated and able to engage at the same level as the planner and/or developer. Henry Sanoff argues in his book *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning* that people participate at their own levels of interest and expertise, and they need to know what an issue is about before being able to decide whether they want to participate (Sanoff, 2000). That is why educational materials on the development planning process are key for successful public engagement. The public has more influence during the development planning process when they do not have to play catch-up learning about development's rules, regulations, or jargon. *The Resident's Guide* will educate the

public on the purpose development serves, the regulations it abides by, and the standards it must meet.

The Resident's Guide to Development will review all aspects of the development planning process. It will first review the purpose of the guide itself, and then will cover the general purpose and processes of development planning. It will then dive specifically into zoning, subdivision regulations, and Lexington's *The Placebuilder* (Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, 2019b). Next, the development planning process will be detailed and every opportunity for the public to participate in that process will be reviewed. The document will conclude with a breakdown of important people involved in the process and will detail other Lexington documents that relate to the development planning process. The guide will answer questions about why zoning and subdivision regulations are important and it will give a detailed review of the framework and components of *The Placebuilder*. This document is newly adopted, as of 2018, and dedicated attention to its framework is needed to better review its role in the development planning process.

The narration throughout the guide will be approachable to the general public, and will remain as jargon-free as possible. If any jargon is included, it will be subsequently defined, or illustrated, to clarify its meaning to the public. Graphics will be utilized to communicate planning terms, concepts, and processes throughout *The Resident's Guide*. The graphics will be generalized in design so that the public does not misinterpret them for actual development proposals or designs. A variety of graphic styles will be utilized and unified through a sketch-like, casual design. Plan view, street-level and three-dimensional graphics will be used to communicate all aspects of development. The graphics, as well as the entire guide, will be bright,

colorful, fun, and engaging. This document will be designed to feel casual and approachable for any reader to pick up and read, ensuring it to be a successful educational tool for the residents of Lexington to learn about the development planning process.

6.2. Project Product

This project's product, *The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky*, is included as Appendix I on page 78. The final product is structured on the following outline:

1. Purpose of Guide

- a. Public engagement is key for successful development planning
- b. This guide serves as an educational resource on:
 - i. The purpose development serves
 - ii. Regulations development abides by
 - iii. Standards development must meet

2. Development in Lexington

- a. What is development?
 - i. A general definition
 - ii. Why is it important?
 - iii. How does Lexington do it?
 - 1. Comprehensive plan
 - 2. Regulations
 - 3. Processes
- b. How is it regulated?
 - i. Zoning Ordinance

- ii. Subdivision Regulations
- iii. The Placebuilder

3. Zoning

- a. What is zoning?
- b. Why do we need zoning?
- c. What are the different zones?
- d. What else is regulated in the zoning ordinance?
 - i. Lot size
 - ii. Lot width
 - iii. Yards
 - iv. Lot coverage
 - v. Floor area ratio (FAR)
 - vi. Building height
 - vii. Open Space
 - viii. Parking
 - ix. Buffering
 - x. Floodplain

4. Subdivision Regulations

- a. What are subdivision regulations?
- b. Why do we need subdivision regulations?
- c. What is regulated?
 - i. Lot shape

- ii. Block shape
- iii. Streets and sidewalks
- iv. Landscaping and trees

5. The Placebuilder

- a. Purpose and goals
- b. Structure:
 - i. Criteria
 - ii. Place Types
 - iii. Development Types
- c. Place Types
 - i. Downtown
 - ii. 2nd Tier Urban
 - iii. Regional Center
 - iv. Corridor
 - v. Enhanced Neighborhood
 - vi. New Complete Neighborhood
 - vii. Industrial & Production Center
- d. Development Types
 - i. Residential
 - 1. Low Density
 - 2. Medium Density
 - 3. Medium-High Density

4. High Density

ii. Non-Residential / Mixed-Use

1. Low Density

2. Medium Density

3. High Density

4. Industrial & Production

6. Development Review Process

- a. Community Meeting
- b. Place Type
- c. Development Type
- d. Zoning
- e. Subdivision Regulations
- f. The Placebuilder Criteria
- g. Application
- h. Tech Review
- i. Committee Meetings
- j. Planning Commission
- k. City Council

7. Important People

- a. Planning Staff
- b. Neighborhood associations
- c. Developers

- d. Planning Commission
- e. Board of Adjustment
- f. City Council

8. Important Documents

- a. Imagine Lexington
- b. The Placebuilder
- c. Public Engagement Toolkit
- d. The Urban Design Decoder
- e. Developer’s Handbook
- f. Zoning Ordinance
- g. Subdivision Regulations

7. Conclusion

Culminating from my experience working with the Division of Planning in Lexington, Kentucky, this research creates a resource that equips and empowers the public, fostering informed and meaningful public engagement in the development planning process. The public's involvement is pertinent in the implementation of their community's growth and development. Effective public participation within the development planning process is dependent upon educational materials that utilize jargon-free, approachable narrative that is supported by simple, engaging graphics. A review of Lexington's planning context revealed a need for a resource for the public to learn of the foundational concepts of development planning. An understanding of public engagement and graphic communication best practices, as well as effective and approachable graphic design and narration, was established through a review of related literature and five comparable projects. This research resulted in *The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky*; an educational resource approachable for any reader to learn about the foundational concepts and processes of development planning in Lexington, Kentucky.

7.1. Reflection

While working in Lexington, Kentucky from 2014 to 2018, I developed a passion for empowering the public to meaningfully engage in the development planning process. I pursued this further within my graduate education, resulting in this research that will serve as a foundation for my future career. Looking back on the journey of this research, I am grateful for the opportunity to lace together my experience working in Lexington with my career passion of engaging the public in the development planning process. I will not deny that previously being so personally involved with Lexington's development planning process made it difficult to keep the

content of this research focused and trimmed down to the essentials. My experiential understanding of the relationship between development planning and public engagement spans much farther than the extent of this project allowed this research to go.

Having Chris Woodall, the manager of Long-Range Planning in Lexington, Kentucky, and my previous boss, as a member of my advisory committee was a saving grace for this research. His guidance and review ensured this research discussed the essential relationships between Lexington's development planning and public engagement. When I initially proposed this research, I envisioned the staff of Lexington's Division of Planning reviewing the product and providing feedback. Unfortunately, and through nobody's fault but my own, the research timeline was too condensed and I was unable to take the time to have it reviewed. After completing the research, I am thankful that this did not come to fruition. Involving the Division of Planning in the review of this project would have pressured *The Resident's Guide* to be presented as an official government resource. Having Woodall involved in the process ensured it would reflect the reality of the process in Lexington without solidifying it as an official document. The manner in which this research is now presented is simply a passion project fueled by my foundational time working in Lexington.

7.2. Recommendations

This research's intent for the distribution of *The Resident's Guide* is to simply make print and digital copies available to the public in Lexington who desire to learn more about the development planning process. The Division of Planning should further the efficacy of the guide by continuing other public education efforts. For example, graphics from, or inspired by, the guide could be shared regularly on social media. A weekly development-themed post could

provide opportunities for an educational series to be shared on social media platforms, as well as provide opportunities to answer the public's questions about the development planning process on a regular basis. Staff could also host Zoning 101 workshops, or something in that nature, as opportunities for the public to learn more about zoning and other development planning related items. In order to make the guide even more accessible, The Division of Planning could create a web-based version, rather than only hosting the pdf of the guide online. The web-based version could be interactive, allowing the public to play around and change different aspects of a property in order to see how the form and design of the development changes.

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Appendix I - The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky

The Resident's Guide to Development in Lexington, Kentucky is on the following pages.



**THE RESIDENT'S GUIDE
TO DEVELOPMENT IN
LEXINGTON**

Contents.

1. Why this guide?	4
2. What is development?	6
3. What is zoning?	8
4. What are subdivision regulations?	14
5. What is The Placebuilder?	16
6. What is development's planning process?	22
7. Who are the people involved?	26
8. What are other important documents?	28



THE RESIDENT'S GUIDE TO DEVELOPMENT IN

LEXINGTON

So, why do we need this guide?

Hearing what you think about development is important to planners, developers, and decision makers!

We like the proposed townhomes, but can we talk about the parking?

Is it possible to open a corner market in our neighborhood?



This guide is an educational resource for you to learn

about development so that you can feel informed and empowered to give your feedback.

We will learn about: development's purpose, the rules it has to follow, the standards it must meet, and the process it must go through to get approved.



What even is development?

When people say “development” they are generally referring to the construction of buildings.

It can also be used to talk about new roads, parks, even neighborhoods.



How is it planned for?

The City of Lexington plans for development in three different ways:

1. Comprehensive Plan

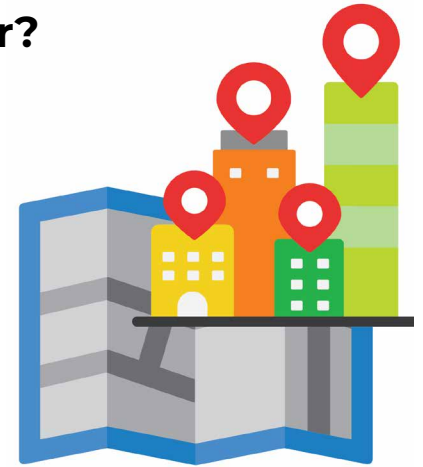
A document that casts a vision for the future of the community.

2. Regulations

Rules that manage how properties can be developed.

3. Process

Ensures all development goes through the same steps and is reviewed by the same people before it can be approved.



Let's learn about regulations!

Why is development important?

Development helps create a community's quality of life.

Quality of life refers to the well-being of a community, in terms of health and happiness, rather than wealth.

Having access to fresh air, places to shop, and places to hang out with other people is important for a community's quality of life.

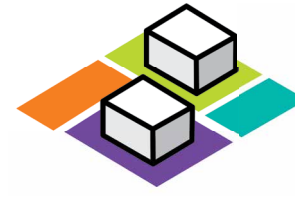


Lexington uses three tools for regulating development:



Zoning

Regulates land use.



Subdivision Regulations

Establishes development patterns.



The Placebuilder

Manages zone changes.

What is zoning?

Zoning is a tool for regulating development that establishes rules about how land is used. For example property can be zoned residential, commercial, industrial, even mixed-use.

Why do we need zoning?

Zoning is a way to implement the community's comprehensive plan.

It also makes sure land uses nearby are compatible with one another, and keeps incompatible uses away. For example, residential land uses should not be located next to heavy duty industrial uses like a quarry.

What are the different zones?



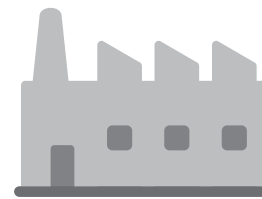
Residential



Commercial



Office



Industrial



Mixed-Use



Agriculture

Just because property is zoned commercial, doesn't mean residential uses can't be developed too. A variety of compatible uses are allowed within each zone! Each zone has a combination of the following categories of land uses:

- 1. Principal Use** - the main land use of a property
- 2. Accessory Use** - other uses that are allowed but must be smaller in scale to the main land use
- 3. Conditional Use** - additional uses that are allowed but need an extra level of review for approval
- 4. Prohibited Use** - uses that are not allowed to be developed at all

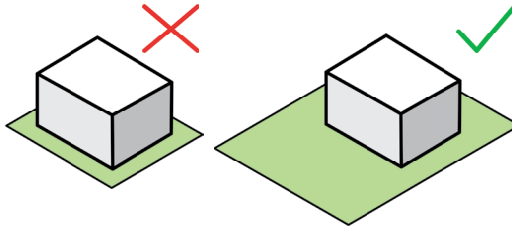


What else is regulated by zoning?

Zoning doesn't just determine land use, it also determines where buildings can be located and how big they can be.

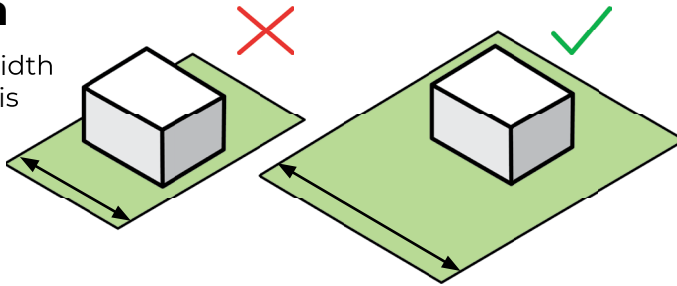
Lot Size

The minimum size an individual property, also called a lot, is allowed to be.



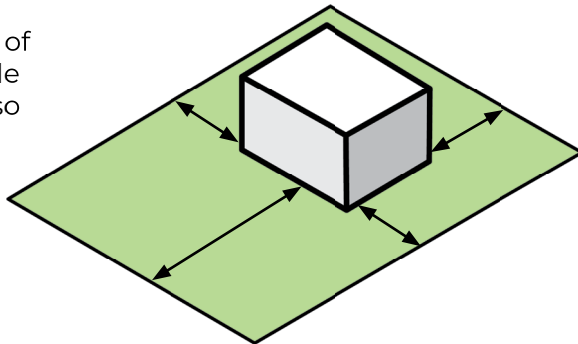
Lot Width

The minimum width an individual lot is allowed to be.



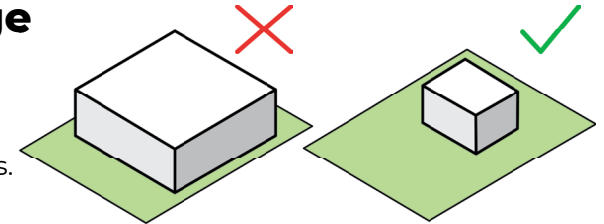
Yards

The minimum size of front, back, and side yards. These are also called setbacks.



Lot Coverage

The maximum amount of a lot allowed to be covered by buildings.

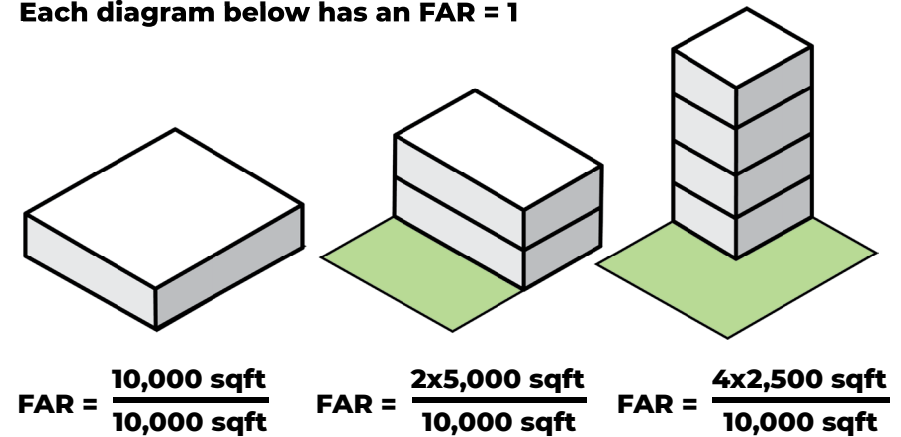


Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

The maximum ratio of building to lot squarefootage.

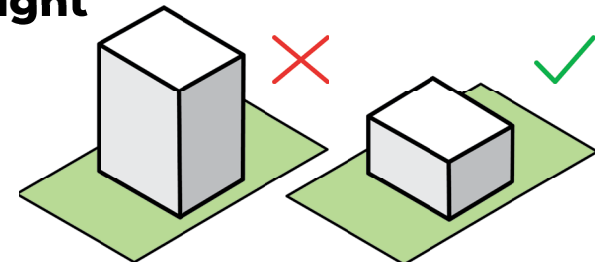
$$\text{FAR} = \frac{\text{building sqft}}{\text{lot sqft}}$$

Each diagram below has an FAR = 1



Building Height

The maximum height allowed for proposed buildings.



Zoning also regulates things like...

Open Space

The amount and type of open space, providing places for people to be outside.

Buffering

Using distance or landscaping to keep incompatible uses from each other.

Parking

The amount of parking required for each type of land use.

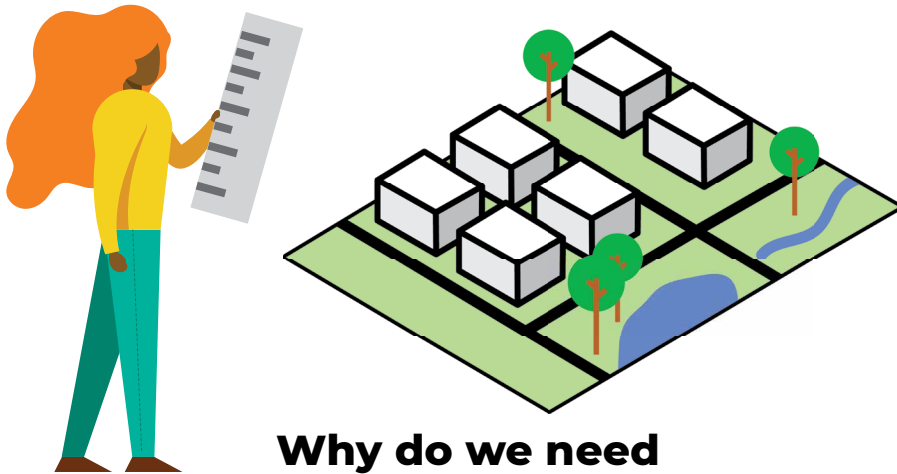
Floodplain

The restriction of uses within the floodplain to protect properties from flood damage.

What are subdivision regulations?

Subdivision regulations establish patterns for how development can be arranged on property.

The term is misleading because “subdivision” does not mean a residential neighborhood; it means the division of land into multiple properties.



Why do we need subdivision regulations?

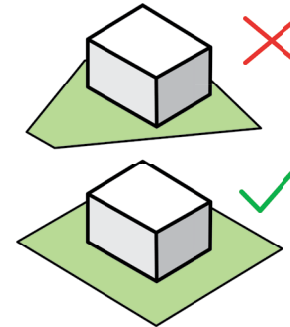
Subdivision regulations help by making sure development protects the health, safety, and welfare of the community and its people.

Subdivision regulations control how development looks and makes sure it is orderly and consistent.

What is regulated within subdivision regulations?

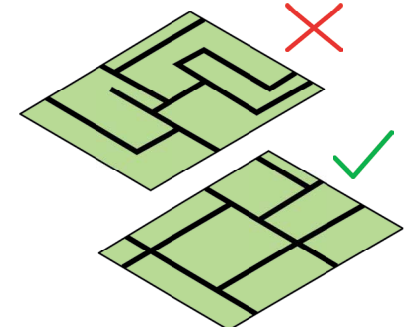
Lots

The shape of lots are regulated to make sure property residents don't get stuck with tricky situations.



Blocks

The size and shape of blocks are regulated to make sure development is easy to walk and navigate when driving.



Streets & Sidewalks

The width of streets and sidewalks are regulated to make sure there is enough room for people in all types of transportation.

Landscaping & Trees

Landscaping and trees are regulated to ensure development is attractive and does not harm the environment.

The wider a street, the faster traffic can drive!



What is The Placebuilder?

The Placebuilder is a part of the 2018 comprehensive plan, Imagine Lexington. It provides guidance to developers, neighbors, and decision-makers on how development should look and function based on its location and context in the community.



The Placebuilder consists of a three-step process that begins by having developers select their place type, then a development type, then address appropriate development criteria.

The development criteria are based on policies adopted in Imagine Lexington. The criteria are guided by urban planning best practices which are detailed in Imagine Lexington.

Check out the section on other important documents, page 24, for more information on Imagine Lexington!

The Placebuilder is structured in the following way:



Place Type

The place types are a selection of development contexts based on the location within the community. They vary in intensity, functionality, and character.



Development Type

The types of development are sorted into residential and non-residential categories. They are then varied by intensity. Depending on the type of development, different types of transportation options are appropriate, as well as other quality of life aspects, like parks.



Criteria

The criteria are specific guidance relating to the property's development. It includes details on how development should be designed, what transportation options should be provided, and environmental issues should be addressed. The criteria will vary based on the place type and development type of the development.

Place Types

The seven place types are based on development contexts located within the community. There is no map saying what property is what place type; it is up to the developer to make their case for what is appropriate for their development.



Downtown

The urban center of a community. Home to a mix of uses which feature commercial on the first floor with office and residential uses on the upper floors. Serves as a center for retail, employment, and entertainment.



2nd Tier Urban

Neighbor to the downtown center, this place type is home to typical downtown uses at a smaller scale. These are transition places and should consider the surrounding community context.



Regional Center

A community hub featuring retail, employment, entertainment, and residential uses. They are home to public spaces like plazas and amphitheatres. They are often located along major road corridors.



New Complete Neighborhood

A brand new neighborhood ready to be developed with a variety of housing types, as well as other uses like small-scale retail, parks, or community centers.



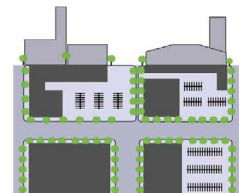
Enhanced Neighborhood

An existing neighborhood that has opportunities to be enhanced with a variety of housing types and additional amenities like retail, parks, or community centers. Proposed developments in these areas should be sensitive to the existing community context.



Corridor

Home to major roadways, this place type focuses on retail, employment and transportation. Residential options are also possible as residents can have access to public transportation and a variety of uses.



Industry & Production Center

Located along major corridors, this place type is home to important job opportunities. Environmental concerns and community context should be addressed with proposed developments.

Development Types

The eight development types are sorted into residential and non-residential forms and then vary by intensity.

Residential



Low Density

Primarily attached and detached single-family housing of varying types that should be supported by related uses and community services.



Medium Density

Primarily attached single-family and multi-family housing of varying types that include parks and other supportive community uses.



Medium-High Density

Primarily multi-family housing of varying types that include parks and other supportive community uses, like retail and employment opportunities.



High Density

Primarily high-rise multi-family housing of varying types that include parks and other supportive community uses, like retail and employment opportunities.

A development type's appropriateness depends on the property's place type. For example, a high density mixed-use development type would not be appropriate in an enhanced neighborhood.

Mixed-Use/ Non-Residential



Low Density

Primarily neighborhood-serving commercial uses, services, places of employment, and/or a mix of uses within low to mid-rise structures appropriately scaled to the surrounding neighborhood.



Medium Density

Primarily community-serving commercial uses, services, places of employment, and/or a mix of uses within mid-rise structures with a higher Floor Area Ratio.



High Density

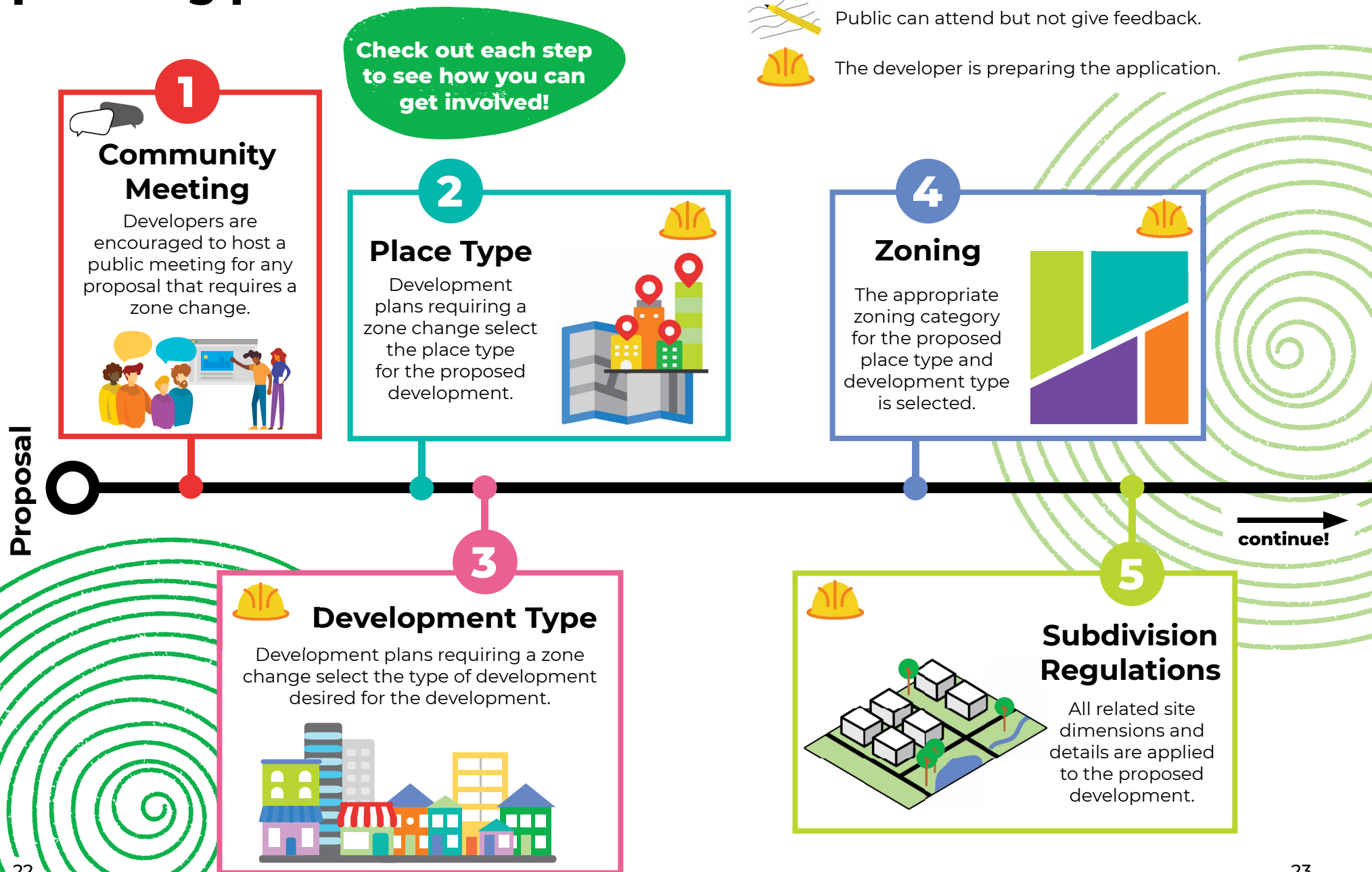
Primarily regional-serving commercial uses, services, places of employment, and/or a mix of uses within high-rise structures with a high Floor Area Ratio.



Industrial & Production

Primarily employment land dedicated to the most intense types of development for employment opportunities. This is the only development type where uses are typically incompatible with other uses.

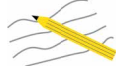
What is the development planning process?



Look for these symbols to see how you can get involved!



Public can attend and give feedback.



Public can attend but not give feedback.



Public cannot attend or give feedback.

6

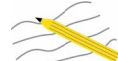


Placebuilder Criteria

Development plans requiring a zone change must review appropriate criteria for the proposed development.



8



Tech Review

Development professionals review the technical details of the proposed development.



9

Committee Meetings

Development proposals are reviewed, concerns are discussed, and recommendations are made to the Planning Commission.



7



Application

All plans and development details are formally submitted to the Division of Planning for review.



10



Planning Commission

Developments and other planning projects, like the comprehensive plan, are voted on.



11



City Council

Only developments requiring a zone change need to be approved by City Council.

Check out each step to see how you can get involved!

Approval

Who are the people involved we can talk to?



Planning Staff.

The staff of Lexington's Division of Planning love to help anyone who has questions. They are experts and understand that development can be detailed and confusing. They can answer questions about the comprehensive plan and transportation too. They talk with the public every day, so give them a call or stop by whenever you need a little extra guidance.

Neighborhood Associations.

People in your neighborhood also have questions about development. Lexington has more than 250 registered Neighborhood Associations, many of which take an active interest in development proposals in their area. Reach out and attend a meeting if you have questions about what is going on in your neighborhood.

Developers.

Developers know the development process inside and out. You'll most likely be able to talk to a developer directly at a public engagement meeting about one of their development proposals. Check out the Public Engagement Toolkit for more information.

Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission is a group of eleven members of the public with various backgrounds that are appointed by the mayor. They are in charge of reviewing all development proposals and overseeing the process for updating the comprehensive plan. They meet on a bi-weekly basis and the public is welcome to attend and give input at their meetings.

Board of Adjustment.

The Board of Adjustment is a little different. They are a group of seven members of the public with various backgrounds that are appointed by the mayor. They are in charge of reviewing development proposals that require special permissions, like conditional uses. They meet on a monthly basis and the public is welcome to attend and give input at their meetings.

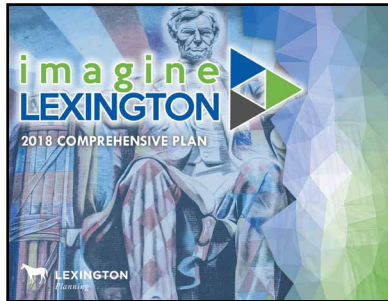
City Council.

The City Council is a group of fifteen members who are elected into their positions by Lexington voters. They are in charge of conducting administrative responsibilities for the City of Lexington including approving zone changes and the final comprehensive plan.

What are other documents we can learn from?

Imagine Lexington.

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan, Imagine Lexington, is designed to create a vision and strategy that will allow Lexington to grow and prosper while preserving, protecting and enhancing existing neighborhoods, downtown and the rural Bluegrass cultural landscape.



Imagine Lexington is structured with goals and objectives, elements, and implementation items. The goals and objectives create the skeleton of the document, while the elements are the flesh that fill out the plan and gives it substance. The elements are broken down into seven themes. These themes focus on different subjects like neighborhoods, the economy, and transportation. For each theme, a set of three pillars are created that provide structure and emphasize key concepts. Policies are included within each theme, and guided by the pillars, and give explicit direction and recommendations for steps forward.

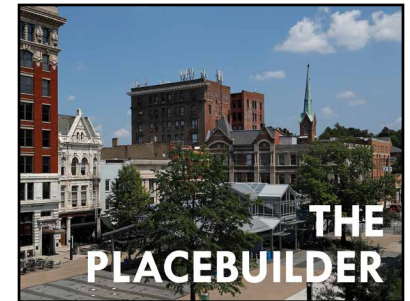
Woven within all themes are action items that call out specific next steps in implementing the vision of Imagine Lexington. These action items are organized by short-term and long-term items, as well as internally and externally focused items. Internally focused action items are intended for The Division of Planning or other government agencies to take action on, while externally focused action items are meant for the development community or other related organizations.

For more information on Imagine Lexington, reach out to The Division of Planning or visit imaginelexington.com.

The Placebuilder.

The Placebuilder is a component of Lexington's 2018 comprehensive plan, Imagine Lexington. It is intended to give guidance and structure to the development review process.

It is composed of a three-step process where developers select a place type, then a development type, and then address development criteria that is appropriate for the context and character of their proposal. Additional information on the structure of The Placebuilder can be found in The Placebuilder section of this guide on page 14.



For more information on The Placebuilder, reach out to The Division of Planning or visit imaginelexington.com/placebuilder.

Public Engagement Toolkit.

The Public Engagement Toolkit, also known as PET, is a resource for developers, neighborhoods, and members of the public on how to host and engage during public input meetings. A goal within Imagine Lexington is to increase meaningful engagement within the development planning process. PET was created to answer that goal.

PET helps to explain the development review process, where information about proposed developments can be found, and highlights stages in the process where public input can be provided.



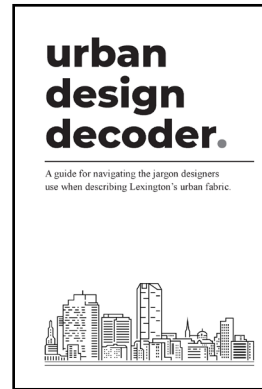
For more information on PET, reach out to The Division of Planning, your local neighborhood association, or visit imaginelexington.com/PET.

Urban Design Decoder.

The world of development and urban design is filled with a lot of jargon. The Urban Design Decoder was created by the Division of Planning as a glossary and guide for learning these terms.

To accompany this guide, the Division of Planning also put together two presentations called Urban Design 101 & 102. These presentations review urban design terms and concepts in a step-by-step easy to learn process. These presentations can be found online at the website listed below.

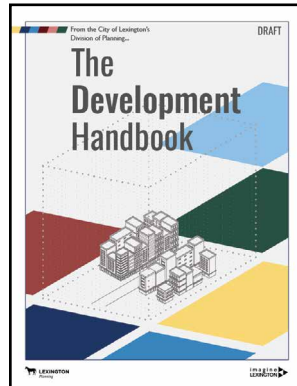
For more information on the Urban Design Decoder, reach out to the Division of Planning or visit imaginelexington.com/urbandesign.



Development Handbook.

The Development Handbook gives a detailed overview of the development review process. An update to this document is due later in 2021. This will be a helpful guide for developers, the public, and others involved in the development planning process to learn about the process in a user-friendly way. The review processes and people involved will be detailed in full with the 2021 update.

For more information on the 2021 update to the Development Handbook reach out to the Division of Planning.

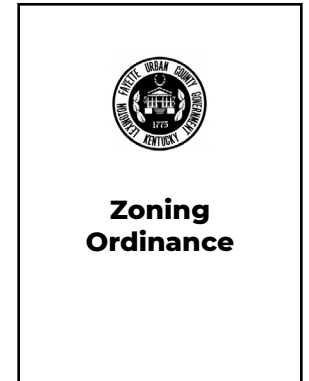


Zoning Ordinance.

The zoning ordinance details how land can be used and developed throughout the City of Lexington. It specifies all types of land uses allowed in each zone, lot development standards, as well parking requirements.

More information on how zoning works and what all is regulated by zoning can be found in the Zoning section of this guide on page 8.

For more information on the Zoning Ordinance, reach out to the Division of Planning or visit lexingtonky.gov/zoning-ordinance.

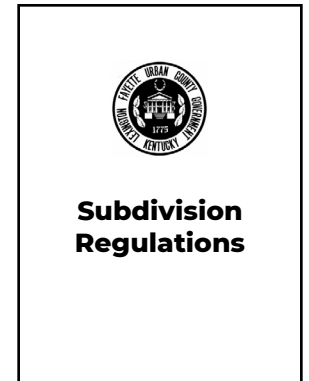


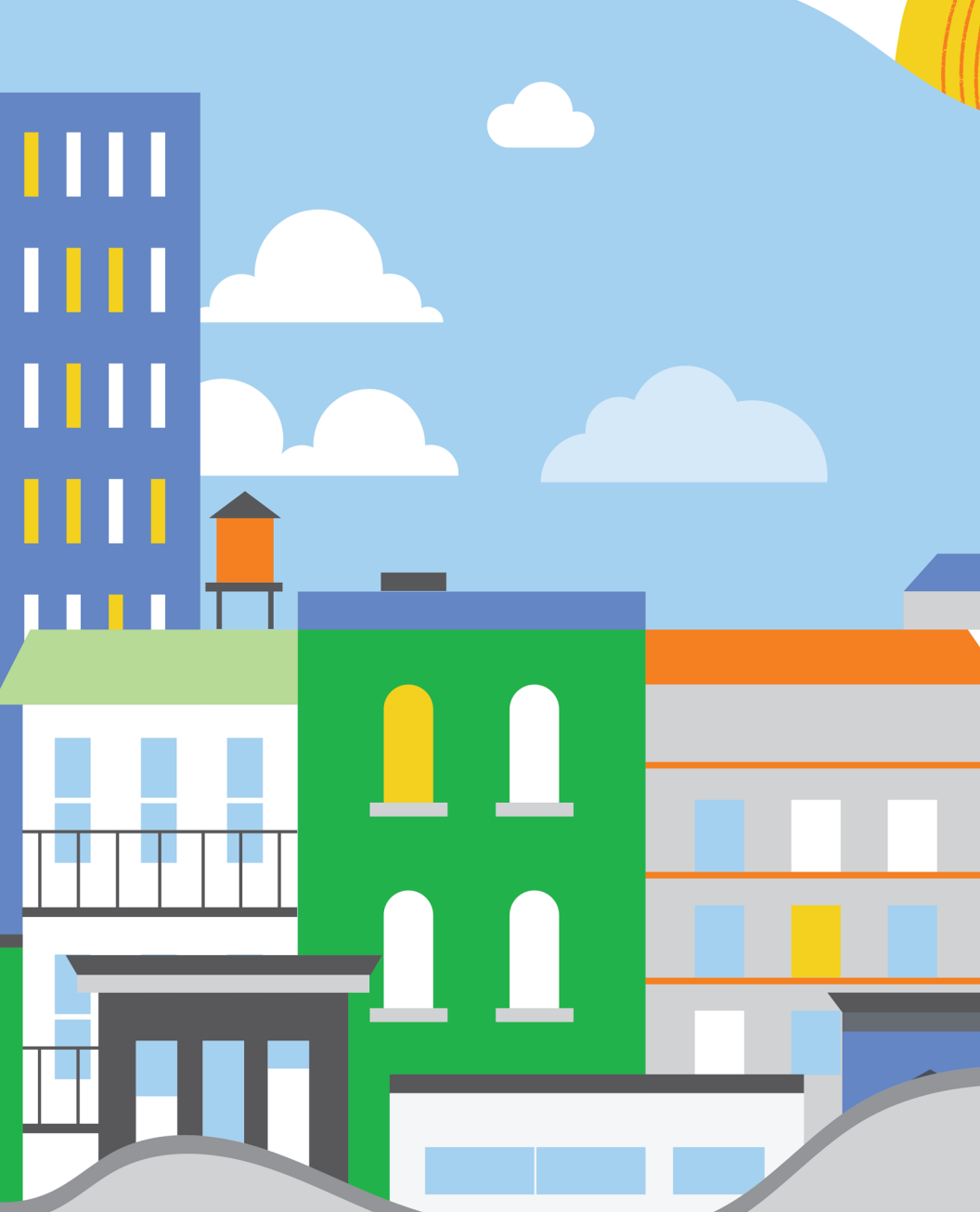
Subdivision Regulations.

Subdivision regulations establish standards for how development must be structured and organized. The term is misleading and does not apply only to neighborhood subdivisions. Any time a property is split, or subdivided, into two or more properties, they must follow the subdivision regulations.

More information on how subdivision regulations work and what all is regulated within them can be found in the Subdivision Regulations section of this guide on page 12.

For more information on Subdivision Regulations, reach out to the Division of Planning or visit lexingtonky.gov/land-subdivision-regulations.





This guidebook was designed by Meghan Jennings in March 2021 as a capstone project for a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning at Ball State University.

Graphics used in this guidebook were adapted from resources on [vecteezy.com](https://www.vecteezy.com) and freedesignresources.net.